

Your Guide to Cult Movies, Arthouse Oddities, Drive-In Swill, and Underground Obscurities!

# SHOCK

## CINEMA

Number 19 / Fall-Winter 2001

Canada: \$7.00 / \$5.00

Including interviews with

**JAMES REMAR**

48 HRS., THE COTTON CLUB,  
DRUGSTORE COWBOY

— AND —

scriptwriter

**LORENZO SEMPLE, JR.**

BATMAN, KING KONG,  
PRETTY POISON

— AND —

**DON GORDON**

BULLITT, SLAUGHTER,  
PAPILLON, THE MACK



Reviewed in this issue:

Gonks Go Beat • Inchon  
Deafula • Hell House  
Convicts 4 • Stardust  
Demon Lover Diary  
Bigger Than Life  
A Ghost Story for  
Christmas  
Phantom of Hollywood  
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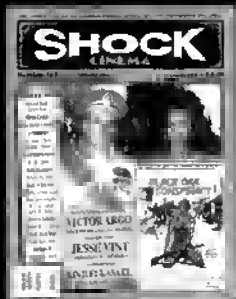
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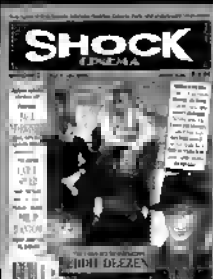
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**SC 18. Spr/Sum. 2001. \$5.** Interviews with Victor Argo, Jesse Vint, Kinji Fukasaku. Reviews include *Dying of Laughter*, *Quiet Days in Glichy*, *The Owl Service*, *Stake-out on Dope Street*, *Bleeder*, *Welcome Home Soldier Boys*, *Mondo Candido*, *Felidae*, etc.

**SC 17. Fall/Winter 2001. \$5.** Interviews with Carol Speed, Eddie Deezen, Philip D'Antoni, Paul Morrissey. Reviews include *The She-Ra*, *Year of the Sex Olympics*, *Whistle and I'll Come to You*, *Steam Bath*, *Pearls Before Swine*, 23, Synanon, Stone, etc.



**SC 16. Spr/Summer 2000. \$5.** Interviews with Julius W. Harns, Marilyn Joi, Michael Campus, Sid Haig. Reviews include *Play It As It Lays*, *The Zebra Killer*, *Baby Love*, *Of Freaks and Men*, *Ghostwatch*, etc.

**SC 15. Fall/Winter 1999. \$5.** Interviews with Fred Williamson, Hugh Keays-Byrne. Reviews include *Je T'Aime Je T'Aime*, *The Story of Mankind*, *The Milky Life*, *Brother Theodore Speaks*, *The Cool World*, etc.

**SC 14. Spring/Summer 1999. \$5.** Interviews with Paul Koslo, A.C. Stephen and Haj. Reviews include *Coming Apart*, *Can Dialectics Break Backs?*, *Forty Deuce*, *Go Ask Alice*, *Mark IV* Rapture movies, etc.

**SC 13. Fall/Winter 1998. \$5.** Interviews with Don Stroud, Russ Meyer. Reviews include *Who Are You Poofy Maggoo?*, *Punishment Park*, *Pound*, *Bigfoot and Wildboy*, *Jag Mandar*, *That Man Bolt*, etc.

**SC 12. Spring/Summer 1998. \$5.** Interview with William Smith. Reviews include *Skaletown U.S.A.*, *Werewolf of Woodstock*, *Violent Playground*, *Gong Show Movie*, *Evil Roy Slade*, *Spermula*, etc.

**SC 11. Fall/Winter 1997. \$5.** Reviews include *Trans-Europ-Express*, *The Big Cube*, *Dennis Hopper's The American Dreamer*, *They Call Her One-Eye*, *Roger Vadim's Charlotte*, *Vigilante Force*, etc.

**SC 10. Spring/Summer 1997. \$5.** Reviews include *The Phynx*, *Kid Blue*, *Andy Warhol's Bike Boy*, *Crazy Thunder Road*, *A Man Called Dagger*, *Candice Rialson in Pets*, *Mad Foxes*, etc.

**SC 9. Fall/Winter 1996. \$5.** Reviews include *Blast of Silence*, *Dusty and Sweets McGee*, *The Maltese Bippy*, *Black Moon*, *Dirty Little Billy*, *Timothy Leary's Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out*, *The Orkley Kid*, etc.

**SC 8. Spring/Summer 1996. \$5.** Reviews include *Daisies*, *Let My Puppets Come*, *Who Killed Teddy Bear?*, *God's Angry Man*, *Pink Narcissus*, *The Candy Snatchers*, *Moonchild*, *Chet in Chastity*, etc.

**SC 7. 1995. \$4.** Reviews include *Beyond Love and Evil*, *Son of Dracula*, *The Saragossa Manuscript*, *Privilege*, *Flaming Creatures*, *Cisco Pike*, etc.

**SC 6. 1994. \$4.** Reviews include *Farewell Uncle Tom*, *Timothy Carey's The World's Greatest Sinner*, *Skidoo*, *The Chelsea Girls*, *Chafed Elbows*, *Paul Bartel's Shell Life*, *Young Playthings*, etc.

It's SHOCK CINEMA time, folks, with yet another issue overflowing with interviews and reviews devoted to the world of cult cinema. What's cult cinema, you ask? Everything from ignored imports, forgotten craziness, big-star debacles, and a lot of entertaining movies that never get the credit they deserve. This outing is also highlighted by four outstanding interviews, beginning with the ultra-cool James Remar, who burnt up the screen in 48 HRS. and THE WARRIORS, and continued to impress moviegoers in big-budget studio fare (THE COTTON CLUB) and indie gems (DRUGSTORE COWBOY). Don Gordon caught moviegoers' attention alongside eccentric stars like Steve McQueen (BULLITT) and Dennis Hopper (THE LAST MOVIE), and his lengthy career includes blaxploitation, horror movies, cop flicks, and much more... Jared Martin is best known to sci-fi fans for his TV roles in WAR OF THE WORLDS and FANTASTIC JOURNEY, but has also worked on the big screen with a wild roster of celebs — Brian DePalma, Fred Williamson, Lucio Fulci, and even Pia Zadora... Last but not least, there's writer Lorenzo Semple Jr., who brought BATMAN to '60s TV-screens and scripted a cool array of big-screen fare, from PRETTY POISON to PAPILLON. At only 6-years-old, BATMAN became the first TV-series I was addicted to, so he's partly to blame for my present-day movie mania... In addition to these Q&A's, we have over 100 reviews, which should keep film addicts happily sedated. I'm always trying to dig up the rarest titles, and hopefully I've done my job. (If I didn't, I'm sure you'll let me know.)

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:** Single copies are still \$5 (postpaid) and a 4-issue subscription is \$18 (with all checks made out directly to Steve Puchalski). All issues are sent via First Class Mail, so there's less chance of the continually inept US Post Office losing the damned things. When sending in a first-time sub, please let me know which issue you'd like to begin with. As usual, subscribers can keep track of their final issue by checking their mailing label's top right corner... For overseas readers, single copies are \$8, and \$30 gets you a 2-year sub (US currency only)... Note: I'm always looking for new interview possibilities, so if you're in touch with any SHOCK CINEMA-style filmmakers or performers, please drop me a line. All outside contributions (Film Flotsam, interviews, et cetera) must be sub-

mitted on disc or via email, since I'm a two-liniger typist and don't have the patience to transcribe hand-written scrawls any more.

On the home front, I began thinking about this editorial in early September, as another insufferable NYC summer was at an end. As usual, I was struggling with ideas. One thing that pissed me off recently was the media's overblown coverage of a fake film critic named "David Manning," who was fabricated by Sony to help push their shitty new releases. Everyone was so shocked that this could possibly happen, when in fact, we all know that most critics are whores. It was bad enough several years ago, when Hollywood marketing whizzes started digging up small-town newspaper nobodies to promote their movies; but nowadays, any idiot with a homemade website is suddenly considered an honest-to-goodness 'critic'. I planned on naming the worst offenders and calling them studio pawns who swapped generic praise for junkal vacations. I wanted to lament the loss of the truly passionate critics that I grew up with, like Vincent Canby, who passed away last year, and Pauline Kael, who died in September. And finally, I would've urged you to ignore critics' bullshit as much as possible — even my own, since I'm no wiser than any of you. I'm just a guy who loves movies, has opinions and can hopefully recommend a few amusing flicks. Yep, that was the original plan for my editorial.

Of course, everything changed on the morning of September 11th. Thousands were suddenly murdered only 2 1/2 miles from my home, at a location where my wife and I often shopped and traveled through on our way back to Jersey City. Oddly enough, I had to be up early that morning — the first time I'd scraped myself out of bed before 9 a.m. in months — and so, I was able to watch it all happen from the front window of my apartment. Soon the Twin Towers were gone, and so were a lot of innocent people. Suddenly, the thought of complaining about some lake critic didn't seem so important anymore. This type of tragedy gives you a much-needed dose of perspective, so for this issue, I'm going to cut my editorial whining short. Compared to a lot of nearby New Yorkers, I really don't have much to complain about. I'd prefer to go to bed early tonight, hold my wife, and realize that some things in life are more important than others. Peace. 10/1/01

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The ad deadline for SC #20 is **February 10, 2002**. Space is limited, so reserve it ASAP. All checks must be made payable directly to Steven Puchalski. Ad rates are:

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Note: ALL review materials must be in my grubby hands before February 10th! You snooze, you lose.

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**Cover photos:** Top: Bloodied bad-ass James Remar. Bottom left: Don Gordon and Steve McQueen in BULLITT. Bottom right: Jared Martin & the cast of FANTASTIC JOURNEY.

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

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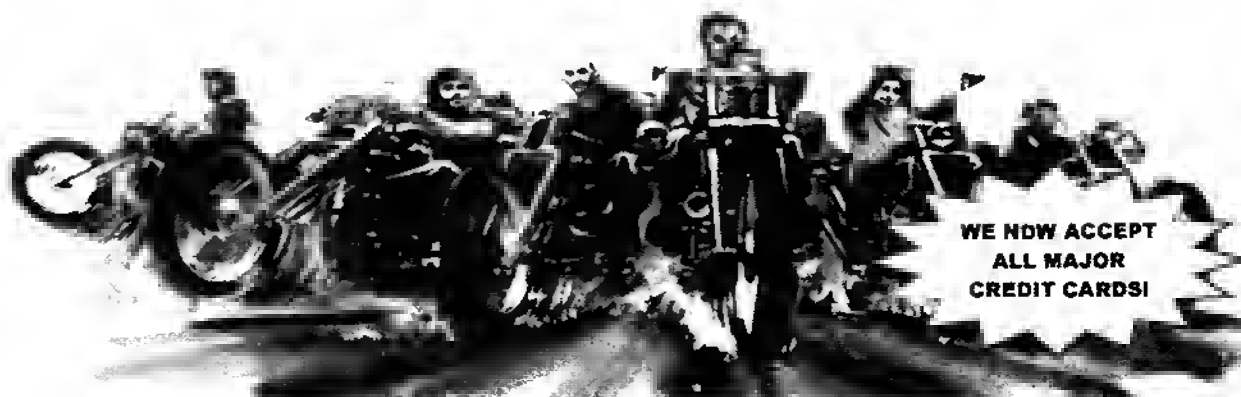
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## "KICKING ASS AND TAKING NAMES"





# THE QUIET COOL OF A GYPSY ACTOR: An Interview With JAMES REMAR

By JEREMIAH KIPP

Intense character actor James Remar made an impact early in his career as trash talking Ajax in Walter Hill's *THE WARRIORS* (1979), a character best remembered for his sulky impatience in dealing with his fellow Coney Island gang members and insatiable urge to thrash all those "wimps" in rival street factions. ("I'll shove that bat up your ass and turn you into a Popsicle!") Poor Ajax goes down like a chump, handcuffed to a park bench by an undercover female cop in Central Park. That didn't stop Remar from continuing a memorable career as hard-edged screen villains in *BAND OF THE HAND* (1986), Francis Ford Coppola's *THE COTTON CLUB* (1984; as mercurial gangster Dutch Schultz), and as the remorseless cop-killer Ganz who terrorized Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy in *48 HRS.* (1982).

With a career spanning over twenty years, Remar has built up a strong body of work that defies villainous typecasting, including roles as diverse as a scarred Neanderthal holy man in *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR* (1984) opposite Daryl Hannah, a brilliant guitarist in the Oscar-winning short *SESSION MAN* (1991), a sensitive bartender who charms Mary Louise Parker in *BOYS ON THE SIDE* (1995), and a young Cheyenne tribesman in *WINDWALKER* (1980). Remar was particularly effective as the dogged narcotics detective who alternately helped and hassled Matt Dillon's junkie in Gus Van Sant's haunting *DRUGSTORE COWBOY* (1989), lending enormous depth to what could have been the token hard-boiled cop. His scenes with a recovering Dillon communicate a genuine sense of tough-love empathy.

If anything lies these assorted roles together, it's Remar's striking charisma and accomplished dedication to his craft. Describing himself as a "gypsy actor" in the traditional sense of the word, he hasn't always been offered the best material (*RENT-A-COP*, anyone?) but can repeatedly be counted on to deliver a fully realized performance. *SHOCK CINEMA* recently had the opportunity to catch up with the low key, quietly cool Remar in New York, where he was honest, articulate, and engaging as we reminisced over his two decades plus of screen experience.

**SHOCK CINEMA:** So what are you doing here in NYC? Do you have anything going on right now?

James Remar: I just finished filming six episodes of *SEX IN THE CITY* — two of them have aired, one of them was the final episode of this season, and the next four will run when the next season starts in January.

**SC:** What character do you play?

Remar: I play a billionaire hotel owner who has a liaison with Kim Cattrall that lasts for a period of time. I actually develop an emotional connection with her, so it's like I'm her boyfriend for six episodes.

**SC:** So you live in Los Angeles and came to New York for shooting?

Remar: Yeah. My kids live here, so I come to New York a lot. This time, I got lucky and came here on the company dime.

**SC:** You said (over the phone) that your kids study Japanese.

Remar: They are half-Japanese, so it's important that they speak their mother tongue, as it were. It's their mother's language.

**SC:** So the other thing you have going on is this *JUSTICE LEAGUE* TV show, which I haven't seen.

Remar: That's just a cartoon voice.

**SC:** Do you do that a lot?

Remar: I haven't done those too frequently. *JUSTICE LEAGUE* was actually my first one. It was fun sitting around with all these actors doing this cartoon.



**SC:** I'd be curious how that even works, actually. They animate to your voice?

Remar: Pretty much, as I understand it. They have their animation sequence set up. The more sophisticated cartoons, like Disney, model the character features after the actors somewhat, and the mannerisms they might bring to it. That's what I've been told, anyway. So the actor has a lot of freedom in playing the part, but I'm not really an expert on it. We sat around in a circle with microphones, the director read the stage directions, and we chimed in our bits from the script. It was fun.

**SC:** Kinda like a reading.

Remar: Yeah, it was. Reading a teleplay I played the crazed manhunter Tobol who's gonna take over the universe. (laughs) But I've done a lot of voice-over for commercials.

**SC:** So it's the same type of thing, only more "dramatic"?

Remar: Well, promotion voice-over can be dramatic, too. They want 'em to be, nowadays. The straight

"announcer" commercial is really very much a thing of the past, but they still want a voice that's strong and distinctive enough to cut through it. They want someone who is approachable, that sounds like a person, and is telling you a story.

Some very famous actors do it. Donald Sutherland has been doing Volvo for years. Robert Mitchum was doing the Beel commercials. (imitates) "What's for dinner?" It's very lucrative. It's a good way for an actor to earn a little extra money and remain anonymous, not compromising their acting integrity in the eyes of the public. A lot of actors do straight commercials for products overseas with the proviso that they're not shown in the United States.

**SC:** I remember reading about that.

Remar: They do a lot of print work and get paid a lot of money. You see all kinds of American stars on the subways in Japan, something you'll never see them do here. Cigarette commercials, included.

**SC:** Your other big picture recently was *WHAT LIES BENEATH*.

Remar: Yeah, that was my last big studio release.

**SC:** That was interesting because you're usually a street level tough guy. This character was more refined.

Remar: He was a professor of psychology. In *HELLRAISER: INFERNO*, I play a psychiatrist/priest. It's nice to do those things for a change.

**SC:** So *WHAT LIES BENEATH* was probably a pretty quick gig.

Remar: I didn't have a lot of actual filming days, but was on contract for several weeks. They bought me for two months, basically. It was a real pleasure working with stars like Michelle Pfeiffer and Harrison Ford because when the cameras were rolling, it was just me, them, and the camera — not me, them, and all their (movie star) thing. I've worked with other famous actors that aren't all there, most of the time, but Michelle and Harrison were real actors.

**SC:** Could you give me an example of the opposite?

Remar: I can't, because that would be to disrespect somebody.

**SC:** You don't have to name names. It's just to get a sense of the difference between —

Remar: I've worked with people who were not interested in acting with me, or they would just do their thing and basically pooh-pooh'd the rest of it. They're very boring to work with. They want to get their side in and be done with it.

**SC:** Could you speak in a general sense about how you see your career playing out? Do you have a strategy?

Remar: I have no strategy. It's beyond that. (laughs) I guess I'm a gypsy actor in the traditional sense. They call me on Tuesday and I'm working on Thursday at whatever job it is they require me for. I'm getting better at my craft. I know that.

**SC: How so?**

Remar: I'm just a better actor. I have more depth, more range, and I'm more relaxed on the camera. I can see it in my work. It feels more interesting for me to watch.

**SC: Is it more a feeling of being there in the moment?**

Remar: Actually, it's not really having any feeling at all. For me, it's successful when I watch something that I've done that I don't remember doing. I see a scene take place and there are gestures like scratching my ear or something that is natural for people to do in conversation, and I don't remember doing it. That's exciting because it means that I was in the character. For a period of time, I was outside of myself. I've been noticing that more and more.

**SC: Well, when you're playing a character who's different from you —**

Remar: They're all different from me. I'm not remotely like any of those people.

I've had some early success with some people that were passionate, tough, criminally oriented — but that's hardly a reflection of my complete person. People are somewhat startled if I happen to play a sensitive role or something that's not so crazy. They say, "Wow! We didn't know you could do that." It's like, "Yeah, I'm an actor." People are amazed, and it amazes me how people think that's what you are when they see you onscreen.

**SC: Do you think that has anything to do with type-casting?**

Remar: Well, typecasting is a very general and useless term. That's saying that I am a type, which is only created by the limitation of business people's imagination. That has nothing to do with my craft. There are broad so-called types, but it's nonexistent in reality. People don't think of me as an articulate, well spoken, well read individual based on what they see onscreen, that's more what I am than some brawling street punk. It's an amazing phenomenon how people take characters and think of them as really being who you are. I mean, sure, some people are better at certain parts than others. I'm good at playing angry, dangerous people, and there's truly a certain extent of that in my personality. I access it well. But I did a movie called *TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: THE MOVIE*, in which I played an artist who was in love with somebody, and I played that beautifully. I believed in it and in myself playing it. That was more like me than anything I've done, as I see me — a struggling artist who wants to do the right thing and is always falling in love. That was more me than Ganz (from *48 HRS.*) I've never fired a shot at another human being in my life — nor would I want to.



James Remar with Diane Lane in *THE COTTON CLUB*

**SC: What roles really stood out for you?**

Remar: I like *THE WARRIORS* because it was more my first. I really got to be a kid. You know, run around and be nuts. I also liked *48 HRS.* a lot because that was a very important character in American culture that had a lot of solid backstory.

**SC: Do you mean disenfranchised or just bitter?**

Remar: I don't mean "just" anything. He was a state raised convict with an impoverished upbringing. He may have been orphaned or fallen in with the wrong crowd, basically raised by the state in a series of foster homes, reformatories, and then ultimately jails and penitentiaries. Like Gary Gilmore or Jack Henry Abbott, he's a state raised convict. These guys are unleashed on society after a certain amount of time and they don't know what to do. They're badly damaged people, and that path may have started innocuously, like with a petty theft. He got caught, and there was nobody to bail him out. He ended up doing a year and all kinds of terrible things happened to him. It's a very important reflection of the penal system. He's very much an outlaw in the American tradition. People fuckin' see me on the street and they say, "Ganz! Ganz! Ganz!" like I was Jesse James — and Ganz didn't do anything for anybody, but people like that character.

**SC: Does that disturb you?**

Remar: I think it's a disturbing comment on the culture, but I find it rewarding that people found it memorable. I got to be in a good film and played somebody who was out there. He just had it. He wasn't going back to jail. Those characters are pretty cool, and I still feel like I stood up to the plate on that one.

I liked playing Dutch Schultz in *THE COTTON CLUB* — he's really the only biographical historical character that I've played.

**SC: So you did your research?**

Remar: Oh yeah. I did a lot of research on him. The more time I have, the more I can research the character. But most of the time, as I was telling you, I'm a gypsy actor. Most of us are not afforded the same luxury as many big stars are. Will Smith had the opportunity to spend a year preparing for *ALI*, and his money's taken care of. He doesn't have to worry about doing this or that in order to pay the rent or keep the kids in school. Most of us have to go in there and bring it as fast as we can. In the case of something like Dutch Schultz, where I got to play a historical character with a lot of preparation and a lot of time, you get to learn a lot about American history. That's something that you completely don't bring yourself to. The more I know about him and what he did, the more I'm playing someone who is completely not me. Conversely, I get to see myself in this person. It's all part of why I'm an actor, experiencing our essential behavior.

**SC: As an actor, how much say did you have in the period costumes, if the clothes doth proclaim the man?**

Remar: Dutch Schultz was a period piece designed by a great costume designer named Milena Canonero, who also worked on *BARRY LYNDON* and is one of the best in the world. She's a costumer of the kind that I love to work with. She helped me feel comfortable and enables me to look the part without trying to confine me. It ultimately helps me to play that role. I've been in costumes where I said, "I can't wear this. This is uncomfortable for me." Sometimes people try to make the costume be the character, but I am not of the philosophy that the clothes make the man. The man makes the clothes.

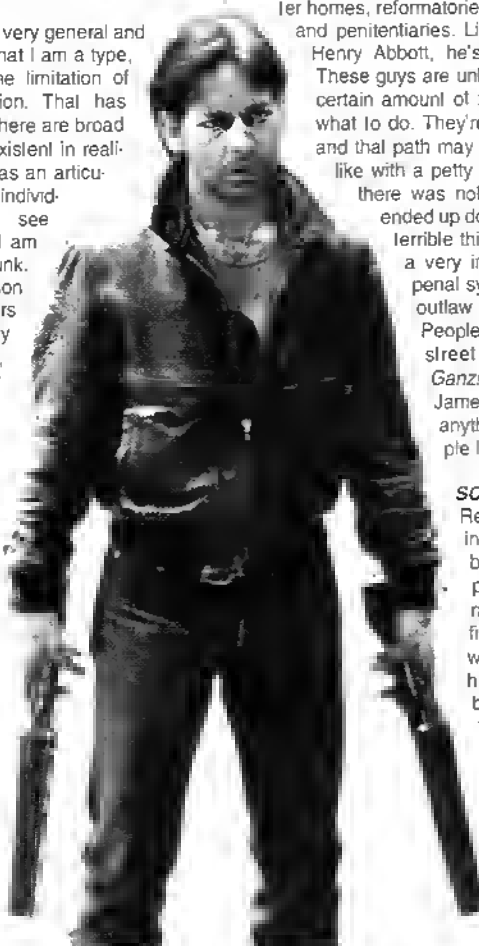
**SC: With the period film obviously you're dealing in a different historical era, where you have to approach the manners of those times. How do you inform your character in that way?**

Remar: That's a good phrase, "How do you inform your character?"

In building a character, you take into account the greater circumstances and the inner circumstances. The greater circumstances are the world around you. If you're portraying an era where they have no cell phones or air conditioning, it's gonna look and feel different. So I have to not use the cell phone and physically get away from TV. This was a time when it was always freezing, or always hot. If you're playing somebody from World War II, people walked with more solidity then. All those things are gonna inform you and provide clues as to where you can go. As for the inner circumstances, it's the conditions of one's birth, one's religious background. You take a look at the period of time and see where people were at.

**SC: In terms of honoring certain characters, you play a Native American in *WINDWALKER*.**

Remar: I played a Cheyenne, and was given a name in the Cheyenne tribe...The funny thing is that I was doing *BENT* on Broadway right before *WINDWALKER*, and I had my hair bleached out Germanic blonde, playing a homosexual nazi hustler. What happened was, they were looking for a leading character to play the young Trevor Howard. They wanted to see me because of *THE LONG RIDERS*, where I had my hair long and dyed black. They also auditioned a lot of actors, and a lot of Native American actors. I showed up in Utah with this blonde hair and it freaked them out, because once again they forgot that I'm an actor. After they put me in a wig and I auditioned for it, they said, "We want you to do it."



There was an important man there who was a Cheyenne chief, who was also a green beret in Vietnam. He and his wife were doing the translation for *WINDWALKER*, because all the characters speak in their native tongues. I asked him honestly, "Is it all right with you if I play this part?" He said, "You'll do just fine." That gave me permission to play the role, because understandably we haven't reached the point where any actor can go ahead and play anything. Different ethnic backgrounds, for a period of time, are gonna have to be the ones seen in those roles so we don't go back to doing blackface. But I got permission from the guy, permission from The Man. That was one of my great experiences as an actor, and I'm personally deeply fond of that film, of all the qualities the lead character expresses. He wasn't a wimp, y'know? I love that film very much. I wish I could play it again and do a better job.

**SC: I remember seeing it as a kid — even then it struck me (and I didn't use this word at the time) as very spiritual.**

**Remar:** When you see theater or you see film, as Stella Adler put it, there's the theater with a small "t" and then there's Theater with a big "T". That's something you see where you walk away from it and you think, "Something goes on, something's touched you, something answered something inside of your soul that makes sense. You saw it when you were a kid and it talked about growing old, love, hanging in there, living your life until it's done, because you never know what's in store."

**SC: Did you aspire to being an actor from an early age?**

**Remar:** Oh yeah. When seven years old, I saw *SPARTACUS*. That moved me very much. It made me cry. I wanted to be either Spartacus or Kirk Douglas. I always wanted to do that, but didn't really know it until it came time for me around the age of 20 to make a decision about what I was gonna do in terms of an occupation. I'd been a teenager up until then. I had a draft card for Vietnam but never got called, and the climate of the times was such that you could fuck off for a while. We're talking about 1973-74. I made the decision in like '74 to pursue acting.

I'd performed with a summer camp and really loved it. It provided a sense of common purpose for an hour and a half, and just made me feel a part of things for a minute. I decided to be an actor because I wanted to be either a doctor or a jet pilot or an actor, and I wasn't very good at academics so two of those things were out. And I love flying. I love aircrafts. I don't have a pilot's license, but I'm not 50 yet. That's something I can do in my 50's.

This was one of the very clear decisions of my life, where I mulled it over and decided I would pursue acting as I would an enlistment in the army. I'd give it three or four years, and if nothing happened by then I'll be young enough to start something else. So I gave myself to it 100% at the age of 20. My father was kind enough to pay my tuition for a year at the Neighborhood Playhouse, and it was up to me to cover my rent.

**SC: Your family was supportive?**

**Remar:** My father paid my tuition, but he wanted me to get a degree in something else so I'd have something to fall back on. I told him, "Dad, if I have something to fall back on, I will." I had to abandon myself to it completely. I'm not gonna say I've never looked back, but I'm still doing this today and have managed to meet my responsibilities and provide for my family, so it was an effective decision.

**SC: So you went in and took the plunge.**

**Remar:** I went to New York City's Neighborhood

Playhouse for a year. What was so beautiful about Sanford Meisner's instructions was that they gave me a basic vocabulary for acting. Acting is so elemental that it can't be taught, but it can truly improve if you have the right vocabulary. It informs what you're supposed to be doing. Some people have that without any instructions, but I had a lot of misinformation and self-centeredness. What I didn't need to have explained to me as a child, I needed to have explained to me as an adult. As a child, I had an intuitive understanding of it because our games of make believe when we're children are fully involved. That's what we try to do as adult actors, but it's a lot more informed so it becomes a lot more refined. It's very sophisticated make-believe, if you will.



Remar holding Serene Hedin in *WINDWALKER*

**SC: Do any relationships with specific directors stand out?**

**Remar:** Walter Hill. He loved me as an actor and as a "type". Walter saw me as an urban tough guy. That's what he sees in me and that's where he likes to keep me. With him, it's okay. Walter has always trusted my choices as an actor, which makes me very proud. He really gave me my start in the business and my most prominent job. Being with him feels like I'm with an old friend, and I understand what he's saying and what he wants from me. That's a wonderful thing to have.

**SC: Do you think that has anything to do with starting at a similar point in your careers and going through some of the same hurdles?**

**Remar:** I don't know. I think it's that I saw his writing and understood the force that he wanted it expressed with. When I stepped up and said some of those lines with a real, "fuck you" kind of force, like "go fuck yourself," and I really meant it, he liked that.

I missed the opportunity to play in *STREETS OF FIRE*. I was gonna be flown out to California to be screen tested for the Michael Paré part (as the main hero, Tom Cody), but then I got the word that Universal canceled it and was gonna give the part directly to him.

Walter asked me, "What about Raven (the villain, a role which ultimately went to Willem Dafoe)? I'm not saying I'm offering it to you right now, but..." and I said, "Walter, I just did that." I started getting depressed playing these bad guys all the time, so I basically refused him. That was a mistake. It ultimately has not turned out to be a mistake for me, but that was probably something I should have said yes to. I can't really second guess these things, though, because I artistically did not want to do it all the time. I wanted to do something else. But I misunderstood something about show business that later helped me understand: that it's very important for movie actors to play through their type over a period of however many years, as

was the case with Lee Marvin. He played countless bad guys until he grew older with white hair, and then he became the hero. Lee Marvin ended his career as the heroic guy. It was the same thing with Charles Bronson until he came up with *DEATH WISH* and *THE GREAT ESCAPE*. He was tough and he was quiet, and those became heroic qualities. Charles Bronson was one of my heroes.

Y'know, I would love to play a really nasty bad guy right now. Those parts are very interesting. As strong as the protagonist is, that's how strong the antagonist is. But it bothered me back then, so I didn't play through it. I didn't think I was getting my chance and felt like I had a lot of sensitivity to express. It's also about ego. I was taking it personally that people would just see me as the bad guy, and those parts were growing boring. I wasn't always able to find something fresh and exciting playing those parts with someone other than Walter Hill.

**SC: With *DRUGSTORE COWBOY*, I got the impression you were playing through a certain type. There were different shadings there.**

**Remar:** That was a wonderful collaborative effort. Gus Van Sant is an excellent director. He says almost nothing, yet he'll answer any question that might come up. Gus lets things happen. The story took place in 1970, and there were things I wanted to do with the character to make him historically accurate. (My character) Gentry was a decent man. Maybe he's a cop, maybe he's a narc, but maybe he's not gonna be in four or five years. He's somebody who went to fucking Vietnam in '65 and the world is different for him now. You don't hear any of that in the story, but that's backstory I created for myself, that Gus approved of. It allowed that character to have some depth.

Gentry wasn't just your typical cardboard narcotics detective. He's got some fucking conflict going on, because he liked Bob. He respected him. He felt bad that the kid was a junkie. It was his job to mess with the kid. Look, he didn't like the fact that Bob fucked with his people, but he didn't kill Bob. Let's face it, if he was really gonna get hard about it, he would've made sure that Bob scored some dope that was a hot load — and made sure that fucking killed him, but he didn't do that. He wasn't fucking around with Bob when he was getting pissed off, but he didn't just put Bob in cuffs and throw away the key. "That's it, Bob. Possession." Or plant shit on him or any number of things these guys may have done to someone they particularly disliked. The script presented him as an inept boob, but it was important to me that he not be presented that way because that is not good writing. With all due respect to the author, I didn't do that. Yeah, Bob was eluding the cops. Bob was good at what he did. Bob was a slick, smart guy. But it didn't strike me as honest that he was just somebody getting one over on all the heat because they were so stupid. That wasn't honest. C'mon, the guy was a junkie! If he was really smart, he would have scored big money and gone to Amsterdam.

**SC: Even when Bob tries to straighten out a little, Gentry is still around.**

**Remar:** He comes by to check him out. There was a scene that got cut out because it could possibly deflect from Bob where I toss him a pack of cigarettes and we have a smoke. I tell him, "Y'know, Bob, when I was overseas, I was wounded, and I was on morphine for a couple of months so I kinda know what you're going through." I wish they had kept that in, but it was still okay. I liked the movie and I liked working with Matt, who is a good actor. I loved working with Gus Van Sant. I was also in *PSYCHO*.

**SC:** I was gonna ask about that, because the technique seemed so specific: a shot-for-shot recreation. What effect did this have?

**Remar:** There was a little bit of room for interpretation, not much. But it was very interesting to duplicate (or attempt to duplicate) another actor's performance. I had never done that before, fitting myself into that particular slot with my particular energy. I found it a very exciting challenge.

**SC:** People came down hard on *PSYCHO*, but it was an interesting experiment.

**Remar:** Gus was trying to do that for many years.

**SC:** There was a lot of discouragement.

**Remar:** That's what happens when somebody does something extraordinary in their time, everybody's gonna fucking mock them. With *APOCALYPSE NOW REDUX*, everybody's like, "Woah!", but Francis (Ford Coppola) took endless crap for that film initially. We did *THE COTTON CLUB*, which certainly has its problems — but there's some heavy stuff going on in that movie that you don't see anywhere else.

Y'know, I read the reviews and was excited about it because I knew I gave a good performance, but they were so awful that it all just got lost. They were all focusing on the budget, saying, "How could you spend this much money doing this?" Everybody was jumping on this. That's like saying, "Michelangelo, how can you be using Italian marble? Why don't you use the marble that you mine up here in New York!" It's like, "It's none of your business if I'm using expensive film stock or not. It's irrelevant!"

There are certain runaway-budget films that are just absolutely awful. (The studios) have learned now that there are films that cost \$90 million to make and they come out with this huge blitz and can make \$100 million, but they're gone in 2 weeks. They don't make films that have the longevity and slaying power where people want to see them over and over again. The only one that's really stayed with people this summer is *SHREK*.

**SC:** By chance, I caught your episode of *MIAMI VICE* where you played Don Johnson's friend. That reminded me you were on *CRIME STORY* and *BAND OF THE HAND*, all produced by Michael Mann.

**Remar:** I like Don Johnson very much. I actually did the last episode of *NASH BRIDGES* a few months ago and got to see him again. I've been clean and sober a long time now, but I wasn't back then. I ran into some problems in England when I was the lead in *ALIENS*, and I got fired for drug possession. So after getting busted and coming back, I walked right into *BAND OF THE HAND*. Don Johnson vouched for me and said, "This guy is okay." He stood up for me when it was not a good time, and I couldn't have been more grateful. Don gets a bad rap for a lot of things, but I think he's a very good guy. He's always been straight up with me. Fortunately, I was able to honor his confidence in backing me up. *BAND OF THE HAND* turned out to be a reasonable performance.

With *CRIME STORY*, I was definitely in a "bad guy" phase of my life at that point. I was a junkie. On that show, they knew they could count on me for a couple of weeks. A little while after that, I changed my life completely. I knew that I did a good job on *MIAMI VICE*. I'd always wanted to work with Michael Mann on a feature because he makes terrific films. *LAST OF THE MOHICANS* is one of my favorite all time movies.

**SC:** *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR* was unusual, in

that you were playing an older, clubfooted cave-man with extensive scar make-up.

**Remar:** It's a lot of fun doing that kind of work. You'll hear that from every actor. *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR* was potentially more than it turned out to be. I could've been better in it, and it could've been improved with a little more support from certain areas. It was somewhat of a fractured production, but one that managed to have a lot going on nevertheless because the actors and crew were very devoted.

**SC:** It's funny that I saw *CLAN* a few years ago and was looking around for you the whole time. "Where's James Remar?" Then it was like, "Oh, he's playing that character." I think that's a testament to becoming a certain role.

**Remar:** When I was a kid, my hero was Lon Chaney (The Man of a Thousand Faces). That's my mission as an actor, to do the transformation. Actually, my introduction to acting was through monster make-up.



Ganz (James Remar) on the run in 48 HRS.

**SC:** Really?

**Remar:** Yeah, I wanted to be a make-up artist so I'd create the monster make-up and run around the house threatening people. There's a real artistry involved in that. When (special effects designer) Dick Smith cut my hairline to match Duell Schultz's, it was the work of a master. My hairline was shaved an inch-and-a-half back, cut out hair by hair, from looking at the picture. It was amazing.

**SC:** I heard you dropped out of school to be in a rock band.

**Remar:** I wasn't in a rock band. I dropped out just to get outta high school. There was this band that moved in across the street and I became a roadie with them for several months. They opened for a lot of big acts like the Beach Boys and Aerosmith, but never got to be one themselves.

**SC:** Do you ever play anything?

**Remar:** I play guitar a little bit. I play some flute and bang around on the piano, not very well. There was a period of time where I was playing a lot of guitar, but that was a long time ago. I gotta get back into it. I grew up when there were rock bands and rock stars and it was really a cultural movement. When there was a wave of something that affected people's hearts and minds in such a way that hasn't happened since. It's no accident that slick, glossy TV commercials have got things like Hendrix in the soundtrack. That's not just for the baby boomer consumers, either. Those are for young people too. People hear the music and they're still into it. It was hot stuff.

**SC:** What was your experience filming *SESSION MAN*?

**Remar:** Well, I got this script for a 30-minute movie, which eventually won the Academy Award in '91 for Best Live Action Short Subject. It's about a guy who is an incredible musician, but was never able to get that flash or that onstage brilliance anywhere other than in the music itself, so he never had a band of his own. He was the great unknown, but all the young musicians know him to be the greatest and some are even threatened by him because he's so good. He's a session player with a nice marriage and a nice home, and bands call him up and he does sessions and tracks for all kinds of well-known bands.

One time, this very famous band calls him in the middle of the night and ask him if he can come down to the studio? The lead guitarist is having a temper tantrum and he's quitting the band. When they bring me into the studio, he sees me and knows who I am. Nobody in the public would know me if they fell over

me, but he's like, "What's he doing here? I play the guitars in the band, not him!" They tell him if he doesn't wanna play, they gotta have someone else. So I lay down this amazing track, and for me it's just like slicing salami. It's all from my heart. It's all of everything. It's the best that I do, and it's great. But it's like making sandwiches. I show up and I do my job. My own personal satisfaction is private.

After I lay down this track, the band says that it was great. They want to offer me the gig and become a part of the band, and I say, "Oh, fuck you. Don't tempt me with bullshit offers." No, no, we really mean it. And I say what about the road? And they say what, you don't like the road? And I'm like, "I love the fucking road." And then we have this jam session and I do all the rest of the tracks on the album and the guy who quit comes back in the end and says, "Hey, we're in a family," and they're all like, "He's back, you're out." And all I get to do is take home the sounds that I've made, once again. It's a very wonderful, bitter-sweet story. I'm very proud of it.

**SC:** Is there anything else you want to talk about?

**Remar:** I want to shoot a movie in Paris very soon.

**SC:** Why Paris?

**Remar:** L'amour! (laughs) No, I just gotta keep doing it, hopefully remaining professional. Maybe someday I'll get a chance to hit the big money or the fame where a lot of people get to see something that really louches them in the way that certain films have louched me. That's my dream. I don't know if I'll get to do that as an actor in this lifetime, but I'm trying to do a professional job and focus on whatever I'm doing all the time rather than any particular strategy, because I don't have one other than to keep myself fit, try not to insult people, try to be in a good mood, and try to be somebody who's fun to work with. That's what I've got to keep doing — being a pro.

You didn't recognize me in *CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR*, that's a tremendous compliment to me. I know I can play the distorted, twisted, physical wreck of a huge spiritual man. That's the same guy that played Ganz in 48 HRS. I can play a Cheyenne who for love and to pursue his lost child went to the ends of the earth and searched for years, never gave up and had a family. The same guy enjoyed kiting cops in another role. That's what I like, when I have the opportunity to succeed against my so-called type. It makes me very happy. It makes me feel a little bit more like a human being. ☺



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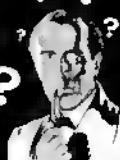
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# FILM REVIEWS

## STARDUST (Shocking Videos; 1975).

Over the years, we've been inundated with generic rock 'n' roll dramas, but this rarely-screened UK import is a standout, steeped in authenticity, attitude and unlinching turns. It's been 20 years since I'd last seen this downbeat film, and while its companion pic, *THAT'LL BE THE DAY*, has been long available, this ambitious sequel remains MIA — undoubtedly due to problems with the music rights, since its soundtrack overflows with classic tunes. (I only wish this bootleg was better quality, but for now, it's the only one out there.) *THAT'LL BE THE DAY* was a gritty '60s tale of early-'60s rebel Jim MacLaine (popstar David "Rock On" Essex), but scripter Ray Connolly and director Michael Apted (in his sophomore feature) have a more expansive agenda, as they follow the rise, phenomenal success, destruction, and self-delusions of a British rock band (which often mirrors The Beatles' career trajectory).

MacLaine's story picks up on the night of JFK's death, as Jim and his leather-jacketed quintet, The Stray Cats — including Paul Nicholas, Dave Edmunds (who did double duty as the music supervisor) and drummer Keith Moon — recruit longtime bud Mike ('50s singer-turned-actor Adam Faith) as their manager and convince a local laundromat owner to be their Brian Epstein clone. They soon go from playing cavernous nightclubs and shagging local lovelies, to wearing mod suits and watching their first single top the charts. But tensions grow when Jim becomes the band's breakout star, and only increase when (never subtle) Larry Hagman appears as a wealthy scumbag who helps seduce MacLaine to the dark side of showbiz.

Their exuberant rise to the top is nothing in comparison to the eventual band blowout, as deluded Jim gets a scary perm, sports silver-lame jackets and refers to himself as "the minstrel of a generation." Jim's longtime girlfriend (Ines Des Longchamps) is the only intelligent voice, but she eventually gets kicked around by Jim too. There's also his prelatious (and really painful) rock opera about the "deification of women," which looks like Rick Wakeman on Xanax. His spiral down is unapologetically heavyhanded, as Jim eventually turns into a reclusive, constantly-stoned basket-case hiding out in his private castle.

We get the picture. Fame sucks. Showbiz can turn you into a dickhead. The paparazzi are parasites. Fans are pawns. And those damned musicians are even worse. The edgy script doesn't shy away from drugs, sex, corporate scum, and celebrity-stupidity, while Apted and cinematographer Tony Richmond (*DON'T LOOK NOW*) expertly capture the grungy early locales, rise-to-lame hysteria, and how unchecked egotism can spoil the best party. Essex flounders during his heavier moments but has plenty of charm (and his resemblance to a 3rd-rate McCartney doesn't hurt matters). Moon brings some Who-esque lunacy to his small role (which primarily consists of throwing food), and the standout perf is from Faith, who rounds up the groupies, handles the payola and plays the all-around puppetmaster. It's an absorbing and incredibly cynical portrait of the highs and lows of music stardom.

## I SAW JESUS DIE (Shocking Videos; 1974).

Just when I'm convinced that I've seen every screwed-up cinematic genre, along comes a new mind-boggler — *JESUS PORN!* Made in Denmark and without English subtitles, I couldn't understand a word of this X-rated passion play from director Ib Fyrsting, but I gave it a shot anyway, since we all know the story of Christ, right? Wrong! Few Jesus flicks begin with this shaggy-haired Son o' God conversing with a slutty demon-dame in a Vegas showgirl bikini and Dracula cape.

Within two minutes, the grainy hardcore action is underway, with a montage of masturbation, blowjobs and assorted coupling. But our savior savior won't be swayed by these lun-loving images, as this quickly turns into 'The Trash Temptation of Christ'. For the rest of the movie, Jesus stumbles about the rocky countryside, recruiting more and

more disciples, who undoubtedly follow the guy because they can't get enough of his sexually-graphic parables. As he lectures to this sycophantic posse, it's intercut with threesome action, nude stonings, castration, virgin debasement, plus a town prostitute who's stripped in public and has a lit candle shoved up her pleasure hole.

Of course, the story takes a bumper turn when Jesus is grabbed by four skinny, scantily-dressed Centurions and tossed into prison, where he watches his cell-mates screw a handy female, but stoically sits in a corner and refuses to partake in the gang-bang. I actually felt bad for poor dull Jesus, because if the guy had gotten laid, it might've lightened up his mood while hanging on that cross. Meanwhile, it climaxes with a big, badly-lensed orgy, as all of the culprits happily fornicate.

No surprise, production values are pathetic — crowd scenes have barely a dozen people, and when they're not talking or screwing outdoors, the grade-school-level sets are continually recycled. Plus, who could've guessed that even in Biblical days, naked chicks had bikini tan-lines? This deviant chunk of religious-trash mixes early-pom aesthetics with Christian-propaganda, and emerges as 84-minutes of sacrilegious slop that melds Ron Ormond with Al Goldstein. Is it bizarre? Absolutely! Erotic? Far from it (although a lot of horny nuns might disagree with me).

## YOU AND ME (Crimson Cult Video; 1972).

It's no secret that I love biker movies, but most of the drive-in greats have already been covered in earlier issues of SC (and my '80s newsletter *SLIMETIME*). Here's an obscurity that I missed, and it's no wonder. For this slow-paced cycle-drama, David Carradine worked double-duty as both star and (first-time) director, and he recruited a lot of old pals for brief roles. Unfortunately, the result isn't your


standard beer-guzzling, ass-kicking, anti-social romp. Lensed in 1972 and (barely) released in '74, this is painfully insipid Biker Lite.

It begins promisingly enough, with Keith Carradine killed in the opening moments by barroom bikers. David C. (who looks like he took garden shears to his hair) plays Zero, the only biker who didn't take part in the murder and who soon splits from the others. When his cycle breaks down in a small town, Zero befriends a boy named Jimmy (Chipper Chadbourne) and after the kid helps him pay for the repairs, Zero offers him a ride in return. In any normal film, this would be considered child endangerment, but here, it's just a gristled biker and an adorable runaway child who's found a new pal.

Carradine obviously found some profundity in this odd pairing, but instead of being tough yet touching, the result is simply vacuous (e.g. the boy eventually asks "Can I call you Dad?"). While the cops search for Zero (since he's suspected of the opening murder), the two mostly just hang out and bond, with this rootless biker eventually discovering the love of a good (in other words, dull) rural gal played by Bobbi Shaw. Soon Zero has changed from bad-ass biker to heartfelt family-lovin' farmer; but thankfully, all boring things have to end, as Zero is pursued for a couple minutes by dumbshit lawmen and the story lumbles to a forgettable finish.

Along the way, Robert Carradine is glimpsed as a gas pump jockey and David's then-current wife Barbara Hershey appears as a waitress. When Zero pisses off a muffled local (Gary Busey) who's hitting on her, Busey wrecks his bike, while Carradine and Hershey leap into the sack. [FYI, while most of this was Oregon-lensed, Hershey's scenes were shot first in LA, since she was pregnant and they needed her on film ASAP.] The title is taken from one of the lousy soundtrack tunes that the various Carradines warble throughout, and the filmmaking is a mess — with actors shot totally from behind or blocked by other characters, almost as if the director was on acid. Oh yeah, I forgot, he probably was! It's a justifiably-forgotten poliohole in everyone's career, and the only good laugh is watching an obviously-stoned David Carradine attempting to peddle a bicycle!

## REMEMBER THE 60's?



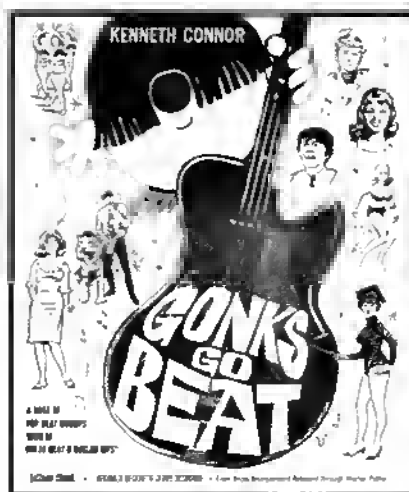
Remember when skirts went up and hair came down?  
Remember when all the girls were screaming for the Beatles?  
Remember when things weren't just great... they were groovy!

FEATURING  
40 GREAT ORIGINAL HITS FROM THE SIXTIES  
INCLUDING:  
DREAM (LOVER) I GET APOORND  
Baby's Come / The Beach Boys  
YOU'RE LOST THAT LONELY FEELING  
The Kinks  
RABBIT BITEBACK SWEET IS  
Real Beatnik  
UP ON THE ROOF  
The Drifters  
HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN  
The Animals  
EYE OF DESTINY  
Barry McGuire  
AND MANY, MANY MORE

## STARDUST

A story that could only have happened in the 60's.

WRITTEN BY RAY CONNOLLY. PRODUCED BY DAVID C. CARRADINE AND SANDRO LEBER. DIRECTED BY MICHAEL APTEID. CAST BY TONY RICHMOND. COSTUME DESIGNER: JANE BROWN. MUSIC BY DAVID C. CARRADINE. EDITOR: JANE BROWN. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: DAVID C. CARRADINE AND SANDRO LEBER. PRODUCED BY DAVID C. CARRADINE AND SANDRO LEBER. DISTRIBUTED BY SHOCKING VIDEOS.



### GONKS GO BEAT (Shocking Videos; 1965).

There was no way I could have anticipated the foreboding, jaw-dropping silliness that oozes from this ultra-colorful, British sci-fi/musical/fantasy. Just try to imagine a live action YELLOW SUBMARINE meets THE BRADY BUNCH VARIETY HOUR. It ain't pretty, but there's a lot to enjoy, beginning with spastic cartoon/puppet credits that'll jump-start any LSD dropped by lucky viewers.

The movie begins in outer space, with superior beings dealing with yet another problem on that irritating planet Earth. You see, the growing tensions between "Bealland" and "Ballad Isle" could lead to galactic chaos, so bumbling ambassador Wilco Roger (Kenneth Connor, a veteran of the CARRY ON franchise) is sent to solve this conflict and bring these clashing cultures together. Super-klutz Wilco first lands in Bealland, which looks like a GILLIGAN'S ISLAND set inhabited by sunglassed, long-haired musicians, all belting out groovy tunes against a fake palm tree backdrop. Ballad Isle, on the other hand, is populated by conservatively-dressed dorks who sing somnambulist, slow-dance dirges.

Wilco eventually tries to unite these two disparate countries by setting up a Romeo-and-Juliet between studly rocker Iain Gregory and ballad chick Barbara Brown. When the two kids run off together, it leads to war, with each army equipped with musical instruments! Yow! Perhaps "Mr. A&R" on "Recording Mountain" (with an entrance shaped like a giant record...you remember those ancient things, right?) can help out, because if Wilco isn't successful, he'll be banished to the Planet Gonk! Even more important, who will win the prestigious Golden Guitar Contest?

Director Robert Hartford-Davis (later known for grindhouse fare like BLACK GUNN) keeps it fast and ridiculous, and the photography by Peter Newbrook (THE ASPHYX) is abrasively vibrant. Characters continually break into song, and while most of the tunes are pathetic and the dance numbers even worse, you never know when the film will burst to life — such as a visit to "Drum Prison" which has nine inmates (including future Cream drummer Ginger Baker, plus renowned session men Bobby Graham and Andy White) ripping loose with an exhaustive, showstopping drum solo! Outstanding! Including guest appearances from a long list of UK flash-in-the-pan bands, including Lulu and The Lovers, The Nashville Teens and The Graham Bond Organization, this is cool, mind-numbing fun.

### BIGGER THAN LIFE (1956).

I've reviewed a ton of drug-themed movies, but somehow, this colorful gem slipped through the cracks. As in REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE, director Nicholas Ray was tackling a 'relevant' social problem, but this time the results are wildly overbaked, with frenzied characters, a cardboard backdrop and sappy music swelling at every dramatic cue. Still, it's oddly compelling, because unlike the usual drug-exploitation fare of its day, with troubled teens under the influence, this centers on a responsible adult who's suddenly trapped in a hellish addiction to Cortisone — which was touted in the '50s as a new wonder drug.

James Mason (who also produced the flick, which explains why no one told him to reign in his performance) stars as overworked teacher Ed Avery, who suffers from severe pain and headaches. Overall, he's a great guy, with a happy nuclear unit and a suburban home that would make the Cleaver Family wet themselves. Ed initially explains away his blackouts as just being "tired," but when physicians diagnose him with a rare and possibly-fatal plight, Ed jumps at the chance to pop the experimental hormone Cortisone every six hours! Thanks to this miracle pill, Ed's pain disappears, he immediately goes back to work, and forgets all about the Doc's warnings of side effects.

Once hooked, Ed's calm personality shifts. He frivolously tosses away money, plays football in the house, ignores job responsibilities, and continues to up his dosage until the guy's as high as a kite! That's when the film gets really fun! Mason is a fine actor, but no one could've pulled off his role's REEFER MADNESS-level of hysteria, as this bow-tied academic

schmuck turns into a blithering basketcase. He begins faking prescriptions in order to maintain his habit, ranting during a parent-teacher night ("We're breeding a race of moral midgets!"), breaking out his wife (Barbara Rush) and son with egotistical excesses, quoting from the Bible, and even planning a mass suicide for his family!

Waller Matthau co-stars as (unlikely) gym teacher Wally, who's worried about his friend's erratic behavior, even as Ed's growing paranoia has him convinced that Wally is secretly screwing his wife. As Mason goes deeper into Cortisone-induced psychosis, director Ray piles on the portentous lighting and camera angles, while the insipid script by Cyril Hume and Richard Maibaum (who later penned over a dozen James Bond movies) hits every possible cliché. It's a prime example of studio-produced, anti-drug propaganda at its most laughably overwrought — delivering its candy-coated 'American' values (including a sappy happy ending) with the subtlety of a dominatrix grinding her high heel into your crotch.

### HELL HOUSE (Shocking Videos; 1998).

During the last few years, the Christian Hell House has become a phenomenon for weak-willed Bible-thumpers who think evil ol' Halloween should provide a deeper religious meaning, and who prefer Salvation over door-to-door candy. Basically, it's an old-fashioned spook house that attempts to scare the "Glory of God" into its customers, by wielding sledgehammer "Praise the Lord" propaganda. This 26-minute visit is the closest I'll ever come to one, since I'd rather give my hard-earned money to a vomiting junkie in a gutter than these intolerant assholes.

Shot on Halloween night 1997 in the Abundant Life Christian Center of Arvada, Colorado, the movie opens with a pre-show prayer meeting for all of the participants, who brag incessantly about their success at "harvesting souls." The pageant's cock-wart writer-producer, Pastor Keenan Roberts, portrays the show's lead demon and is wound so tight with his spiritual mission that he never realizes that Hell House is a pretty lucked-up attraction, and probably more successful for its gory, high-kitsch trappings than young people's devotion to God.

Like some sadistic AfterSchool Special come to life, each room in Hell House tackles a different ungodly, Hades-destined sin — including alcohol, homosexuality, date rape, Satanic human sacrifice, and of course, abortion (with the Devil talking to the lump of aborted flesh as its mother wails). At its end, visitors are rescued from these strident vignettes by cheaply-dressed angels, meet Jesus (a blonde-haired one, of course) and are instructed to be mindless drones by the voice of God.

Director (and renowned still-photographer) Dewey Nicks doesn't go for any cheap shots when documenting these small-town zealots. That would be too easy. Instead, he simply lets them wallow in their frighteningly puritanical mindset, which denounces any opinion but their own. Remember, these are the same sell-righteous nitwits who elected our current president, and think THE BRADY BUNCH is a documentary. The Hell House's big fault? If these close-minded clods are going to

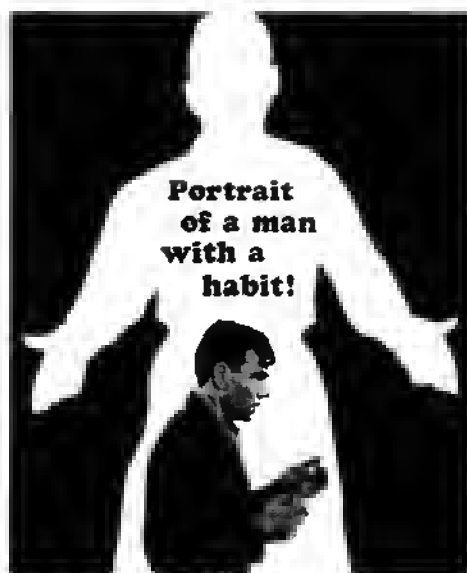
wind up in Heaven, anyone with an I.Q. in the triple-digits will prefer to hang out in Hell instead.

### IS THIS TRIP REALLY NECESSARY? [a.k.a. Blood of the Iron Maiden] (Crimson Cult Video; 1970).

This long-lost chunk of drug-induced sleaze-comedy has finally found its way to video, and while it offers nothing remotely worthwhile to any normal moviegoer, trash-film fanatics will undoubtedly get a big kick out of its outlandish hippie-era trappings and colorful psychedelic indulgence. I know I did! Director Ben Benoit and writer Lee Kalchian don't have a scrap of talent, but when a movie is this ridiculous, the usual standards of 'quality' don't really apply.

Claude Rimbaud (Marvin Miller) is a sleazebag movie producer who gets his jollies by auditioning young ladies and secretly filming their stripped casting sessions. Sexy redhead Carol (Carole Kane — no relation to talented actress Carol Kane) earns a lead role in his newest effort, and despite her boyfriend Peter's reservations, she agrees to this skin flick. Little does she realize, crazy Rimbaud ("King of the nudies," complete with a plaid sport coat and a headful of Vitalis) is going to haul his trio of lovely leads to a creepy mansion, for a tripped-out gig that'll prove his own genius and that "chemistry is the servant of the mind."

During dinner, he slips LSD-laced sugar cubes into their coffee, and let the hallucinations begin! Their surroundings instantly look like the finale of 2001, and when the disposable black chick freaks out, she promptly impales herself on a nearby sword. Oops! Once everyone is properly medicated, the camera rolls and Rimbaud's avant-garde production is underway, with the gals writhing around a mirrored disco-ball in belly-dancer attire, and Rimbaud sounding like a combination of Timothy Leary and Russ Meyer. Meanwhile, Peter (Peter Duryea, son of Dan) checks out trippy nightclubs and spaced-out gals in his dune buggy, hopping to track down poor Carol, who's chained up in Rimbaud's dungeon when she refuses to drop acid.



The Motion Picture You've Been Hearing About...Reading About...And Talking About!





Guest star John Carradine turns up in one long scene as a quack physician who tries to chill down a girl who's zonked out on speed. Electroshock only gets her more excited ("Don't stop now, man! I like it!"), and he finally injects her with a syringe full of coffee. This movie is a four-star mess! Any comedy falls totally flat, the acting reeks, and there's no nudity or hard violence. Still, it's difficult not to appreciate inept filmmakers armed with a loaded camera, a deliciously idiotic concept and those tripped-out visuals. It's a groovy piece of shit, man.

#### ROAD TO SALINA (JAH; 1970).

The late-'60s produced a very special type of cinematic indulgence, which united counterculture themes, aging stars hoping to resurrect dead careers, foreign locales, and incomprehensible scripts. There was *THE BIG CUBE*, *BLOODBATH*, *HALLUCINATION GENERATION*, as well as this groovy, sun-burnt bummer. As for the cast, it has hippie icon Robert Walker, Jr., known for stoned-out tares like *EASY RIDER* and *THE SAVAGE SEVEN*; Mimsy Farmer, who brought her sexy presence to both drive-in drivel (*RIOT ON SUNSET STRIP*) and artsy oddities (*MORE*); plus 51-year-old Rita Hayworth in one of her final roles as a crazy matriarch. And talk about an international hodgepodge — it's a French production, with American leads, set in Mexico, and this print has Japanese subtitles!

Told as one long flashback, bedraggled Walker plays a hippie drifter who turns up in the dusty town of Salina, and is instantly mistaken for Rocky, the long lost son of gas station owner Mara (Hayworth). Happy for a free meal and a place to crash, he doesn't object to her delusion, particularly when he gets a look at his sultry 'sister' Billie (pixie-haired Mimsy). This chick could blow his free ride, but instead, she gets quite close to her 'brother,' as they skinny dip, snuggle in the surf, enjoy scantily-clad sieslas together in bed, and doff their clothes throughout. Of course, possessive Momma doesn't take well to their seemingly-incestuous intimacy, since she wants Rocky all to herself. As Walker attempts to uncover the reasons for Rocky's disappearance, he begins to wonder who's crazier — Mara or Billie?

The script is hysterically overloaded with mistaken identities, old traumas, forbidden eroticism, and family deceptions, but runs out of steam as Rocky's mystery becomes ever more transparent. Walker looks wasted throughout (but it suits his spacey character), Farmer is a four-star tease who brings heat to these brother-sister couplings, and Hayworth is annoyingly strident (the ex-pin-up queen was

### THEY'RE LOCKED IN, BUT THEY'RE WAY OUT!



undoubtedly depressed to be playing the mother of the sex object nowadays). Georges Lautner's direction is haphazard, but that fits the tone of this entire loopy melodrama, as does Maurice Fellus' dreamy photography, which captures a desert backdrop as hot and oppressive as its characters.

#### CONVICTS 4 (1962).

The ads for this b&w prison drama made it look like a wacky, action-packed romp, and any moviegoers who tell for this campaign were undoubtedly pissed. Instead of jailhouse hijinx, this a serious, sell-important and (gag!) *uplifting* tale of crime, punishment, art, and redemption. The best thing going for the flick is its assortment of cast members, topped by a young Ben Gazzara.

Based on the autobiography of convicted killer John Resko, it begins with Gazzara/Resko preparing for the electric chair, including a flashback to how he murdered a shopkeeper during the Depression (while stealing a teddy

bear for his ill girl). His upcoming Big Jolt is put on hold after a last-minute reprieve, and Resko instead becomes the "new fish" at a maximum-melodrama prison. There he meets MY FAVORITE MARTIAN's Ray Walston as a psycho who jumps Resko at every opportunity, and Sammy Davis Jr. as cellmate Wino (who talks about having every "pale-faced peckerwood with a decent job and a good pad"). On the other side of the bars, Broderick Crawford (in a hideously ill-fitting suit) is a hard-assed warden who calls convicts "dog meat," Rod Steiger is a bitter screw named Tipatoes, and Stuart Whitman plays a "do-gooder" head guard who believes in rehabilitation.

As we follow Resko through two decades of incarceration, he tries to escape several times (once with a rope made of old socks!), but he's basically a good-hearted bloke. He teaches Wino how to read, joins the prison art class (taught by Jack Albertson), and deals with heavy lectures about "wrestling with your own personal devils." It's maudlin shit, but at least Vincent Price livens up the final minutes as an art critic who "discovers" Resko's artwork and jump-starts his new course in life.

Sure, this is a true story, but writer/director Millard Kaufman (who penned *BAD DAY AT BLACK ROCK*) turns it into B-movie pabulum, right down to a groan-inducing finale. The actors try hard, but it's a lifeless gig. In fact, the only humor comes from the always-reliable Timothy Carey in an all-too-brief role as inmate Nick Pukalski — talking through clenched teeth and with his eyeballs spinning, he steals every scene as a pal from Resko's old neighborhood. Location scenes were filmed at Folsom Prison, but that's the closest this ever gets to hard-hitting realism.

#### A GHOST STORY FOR CHRISTMAS

As Christmas approaches, you can always count on American TV networks to cram their schedules with uplifting holiday fare about Santa, Jesus, Joy on Earth, and other sewage. But from 1971 through '78, the BBC had the infinitely cooler idea of treating their British Xmas viewers to an annual ghost story. Based on classic works, boasting solid production values and running 35-40 minutes apiece, it's no surprise that this eerie (and refreshingly literate) anthology never made it to the US. Luckily, I was able to dig up four of these elusive programs, and now understand why they're so fondly remembered in their homeland.

One of England's most acclaimed ghost story writers was M.R. James, and this series adapted several of his tales. *A WARNING TO THE CURIOUS* (12/24/72) begins with the legend of the last, long-buried Anglian Crown, which was once protected by a deceased guardian who happily chopped up anyone who dug in its vicinity. Peter Vaughan plays down-on-his-luck archaeologist Paxton, who poses as a holiday tourist, while obsessively searching for this crown. He ignores the nervous local townsfolk and after unearthing this treasure, discovers that the most dangerous part of his quest is yet to come. Because wherever he travels, he's shadowed by a wheezing figure, and since the crown's long-dead caretaker perished from consumption, paranoid Paxton is soon convinced he's being stalked by the undead. His only answer is to return the item, because then he'll be safe, right? Don't be so sure. Although the story's trajectory is a bit familiar nowadays (hey, whaddaya

expect; it was written nearly a century ago), it's still more evocative than any US TV fare from that time.

M.R. James again provided the basis for *LOST HEARTS* (12/25/73), a foreboding tale of revenge from beyond the grave. Simon Gipps-Kent stars as 11-year-old Stephen, who's just moved into the creepy, secluded home of his elderly cousin, Mr. Abney (Joseph O'Connor). Stephen is told that he's the only child on the property, yet catches glimpses of two strange youngsters who peer at him from treeholes, around corners and through windows. He soon learns that two orphans, Phoebe and Giovanni, used to live with the scholarly Abney, and both mysteriously disappeared one morning, without a trace. These ghostly kids provide some genuinely unsettling moments, as they tap their long fingernails on window panes and show off their open chest cavities — and missing hearts! Of course, Abney knows more about these chilling children than he's letting on, as a deadly secret is unveiled on Halloween night. The undead, NOSFERATU-esque make-up is a bit theatrical, but series director Lawrence Gordon Clark maintains tension and a growing sense of foreboding throughout.

Their next M.R. James outing, *THE TREASURE OF ABBOT THOMAS* (12/23/74), had an extremely different tone, with less emphasis on mood and dread. Instead, it took the form of a horrific mystery, as two skeptical men search for an ancient fortune. Michael Bryant (*THE STONE TAPE*) stars as Reverend Somerton, who recruits a young colleague (Paul Lavers) to help find a cache of gold once owned by a 15th century alchemist named Abbot Thomas,

and supposedly located somewhere within a sprawling old religious college. They slowly unravel the clues, which are hidden on stained glass windows and within baffling codes, as they roam from the rooftops to watery catacombs; and as much as the pair tell themselves that their search is purely for scientific research, there's plenty of greed simmering under the surface. Ahh, but some *thing* is also guarding this treasure — a moldy, slimy monster (with more than a little nod to *THE BLOB*) who refuses to accept apologies. Its amusing twists, sumptuous setting and grim denouement makes this one of my favorites.

The series moved onto Charles Dickens territory with *THE SIGNALMAN* (12/22/76), and like the earlier tales, it centers on a rational individual coming to grips with unexplainable forces. While wandering the countryside, a Traveler (Bernard Lloyd) meets a railroad Signalman (Denholm Elliott) who watches over remote train tracks near a long tunnel. The two soon become friends, and the nervous Signalman finally confesses to a series of haunting encounters with a deathly-pale figure, who lurks in the shadows of the tunnel's entrance, and warns of imminent tragedies — from a young bride thrown from a passing train to a full-scale collision. Now he's terrified of yet another visitation and the inevitable repercussions. Elliott is excellent in this difficult role, and has to be alternately sympathetic, paranoid and just a little bit mad, while his new acquaintance assures him that all is well. Yeah, right. Despite solid performances and a couple good jolts, this talky, two-character piece lacks the edginess of the M.R. James adaptations.



### RUSLAN AND LYDMILA (1972).

When it comes to fantasy films, the Russians have always known how to cut through the Disney-esque treacle and keep them sublimely surreal. In this dvd-era, they're becoming more available to US fans, and this is one of the most outrageous. Based on Alexander Pushkin's poem and directed by Alexandr Ptushko (VIJ), it's an epic, live-action, fairy-tale-adventure with a surplus of adult imagery, violence and sumptuous visuals. Initially screened at a 225-minute length, this version clocks in at a leaner (but no less impressive) 139 minutes.

Set in ultra-colorful "bygone days," Valery Kozinets (who resembles an even-gayer Casper Van Dien) is Ruslan, a great warrior for "Sweet Mother Russia", and Natalya Petrova is his true love, the beautiful princess Lyudmila. Their upcoming marriage doesn't sit well with everyone in town, and after Lyudmila is magically abducted, her royal father declares that whoever rescues her can

have this royal hottie as their bride, with Ruslan and a trio of suitor-wannabes riding to her rescue. Little do they know, a dwarf wizard named Chemomir (with a beard so long it has to be carried by servants) is responsible — keeping her a prisoner in a lavish cage, surrounded by flying plates of food and floating ice bridges.

Before long, this looks like Dr. Seuss meets the Arabian Nights, and predates Terry Gilliam's similarly-outrageous *BARON MUNCHAUSEN* by over 15 years. A turban of invisibility provides a slapstick escape, one chaste rescuer is lured into a castle lull of ready-to-please beauties (shades of *MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL*), Ruslan receives advice from a giant's disembodied head, while forest nymph, tie and even a random tiger barely slows down this Wagnerian Ken Doll. To make matters more complex, a withered sootieress is using her magic to thwart Ruslan, but even death won't stop this lug from his quest for his lost lovebird!

The fact that all of the dialogue is in rhyming verse is initially annoying, but that's easy to ignore once its fantastic visuals explode onto the screen. The production design is remarkable, the costumes are hilariously ornate (is a Las Vegas nightclub missing their wardrobe?), and there's plenty of gratuitous action, such as a last-minute attack by Khan's Mongol army, with Ruslan happily lobbing off one human head after another. Gosh, even the occasional musical number isn't boring, because they're so totally screwed-up — it's like Twyla Tharp meets *FORBIDDEN ZONE*. This was Ptushko's final film, before his death in '73, and he definitely blew his wad on this astounding, one-of-a-kind vision.

### THE PHANTOM OF HOLLYWOOD (Just For the Hell of It; 1974).

First telecast on 2/12/74, this was another in the long line of horror-themed TV-movies, which paired an old fashioned monster with plenty of over-the-hill celebrities. I watched them religiously when I was in my early teens, and love rediscovering them as an adult (even if they suck). This 73-minute outing gets extra points for its historical significance with movie buffs, since much of it was filmed on MGM's spacious backlots, just before they were destroyed. It makes for an ingenious, cost-cutting backdrop for a rather slight horror romp.

Hollywood's once-prestigious Worldwide Studios is selling off their decrepit backlots, so they can be turned into housing developments. But one stubborn individual isn't happy about this lucrative deal — a self-proclaimed "Phantom" who roams the old sets in a leather executioner's costume and suede lace mask. During the opening credits, we watch him murder two wise-ass kids who sneak onto the property for some low-grade vandalism. Later, a couple workmen get a skullcracking from this mystery fiend, and he gets even more vengeful on the eve of the backlot's sale. Hey, the guy's just protecting his home from the bulldozers, and like any halfway decent Phantom, he has a tangle of scar-tissue after a tragic accident.

Keith Partridge's even hammier father, Jack Cassidy, stars in a dual role as both the Phantom and (under generic old-age make-up) Otto, Worldwide's most ancient employee. The supporting cast includes old farts like Jackie Coogan as Worldwide's lone film cutter, Broderick Crawford as their security chief and Peter Lawford as a weaselly studio exec, while Peter Haskell and Skye Aubrey (daughter of MGM-prez James T. Aubrey) provide romantic interest, as well as a couple lead characters who weren't collecting Social Security yet. Sexy Aubrey is finally taken to the Phantom's movie-memorabilia-filled lair, and the biggest unintentional laugh is when The Phantom shows her his pre-disfigured headshots, and she pronounces him "as handsome a man as I've ever seen." Now *that's* acting! Second biggest chuckle? The Phantom escapes every peril and dozens of cops, only to slip on a bridge and die! What a tucking klutz!

Director Gene Levitt allows his older actors to run on auto-pilot, while the most interesting aspect of this flick is its padding — roaming about the rundown backlots, film clips of these sets during their heyday, footage of the auction which sold off MGM's most memorable props, and at the end, watching these grande old facades razed. That's certainly more memorable than its routine murders and madness.

### NORWOOD (Video Search of Miami; 1970).

What's that horrible stench? It's coming from this video! I'm always a sucker for dumb-ass studio flicks from the past, and this road movie has all of the proper elements, none of the necessary talent and a genuinely mind-numbing cast. What were the producers thinking?! Since this is based on a novel by Charles Portis, who also wrote *TRUE GRIT* — which made a shitload of money — I guess they decided to reunite that movie's least talented stars, Glen Campbell and Kim Darby. And just to make sure Glen wasn't the crappiest actor on board, they offered NY Jets quarterback Joe Namath his first screen role!

Glen (who warbles several forgettable songs throughout) and "Broadway Joe" play happy-go-lucky Marines who're heading back to their hometowns after a tour of Vietnam. Campbell plays Norwood Pratt, whose only dream is to sing at the Louisiana Hayride. Yes, he's the film's hero, but Norwood is also a 100% "chuckle-head," who'd seem slow on *HEE HAW*. When Norwood hits home, he's pissed off at his pudgy, shitbag brother-in-law (Dom DeLuise) and quickly decides to follow Namath to Manhattan. With guitar in hand, Norwood agrees to drive to Brooklyn for fast-talking businessman Pat Hingle, and is joined by Carol Lynley as a singer-wannabe named Yvonne. They argue through several states, but characters tend to come and go in this sad excuse for a script.

When Norwood hits NYC, he runs into sexy philosophy major Tisha Sterling, who haunts him to a hilarious open-mike Village nightclub — full of longhairs, candles and star music — with this hick bumming out the bohemians with a happy, toe-tapping tune. As Norwood continues to tour the country, he picks up half-pint Billy Curtis (*HIGH PLAINS DRIFTER*) and a kidnapped "wonder chicken," and finally takes a shine to Kim Darby as a pregnant teenager. Thankfully, Namath vanishes for most of the movie, only to pop up in the last 1/2-hour, as Joe and girlfriend Meredith MacRae invite Norwood and his entourage for a down-home dinner.

No surprise, after director Jack Haley Jr. proved he couldn't make a *real* movie, he settled for cobbling together old Tinsetown clips in fossil-lodder like *THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT*. At least the gals make this worth a look — Lynley's in a low-cut outfit, Sterling slips into a black micro-dress, and MacRae's in a bikini. Eccentric, but also insufferably sentimental, this is a disaster in every sense of the word. Mixing heartfelt romance, inane comedy, Campbell's AM-radio tunes, and teeth-gnashing stupidity, this is a movie that would have paying audiences pissing on the screen.



### DEAFULA (Just For the Hell of It; 1975).

Vampire flicks are a dime a dozen, but what makes this genre oddity worth mentioning is that it's in "Signscope" and performed entirely in Sign Language (while a narrative track provides a translation for the non-hearing-impaired audience-masochists). Obviously aimed at a selective audience, the film should defy normal criticism, but hell, that won't stop me from tearing it to shreds, because while it might initially sound good for a laugh, you'll regret it afterward.

Set in modern-day Oregon, Steve Adams was always a bit strange. As a child, he received regular transfusions from his caring clergyman father, while putting the bite on his pet puppy for a between-meal snack. Once grown into a goateed adult (played by writer-director Peter Wechsberg, in ugly matching white pants and turtle-neck), he continues to feast on human blood by instantly transforming into the fanged and caped Count Deafula, complete with a Cyrano-sized rubber nose(?). This vamp might be deaf, but at least he can roam about in bright sunlight, and when a rowdy biker abuses Steve, he hypnotizes the guy to drive off a cliff (no, they don't actually smash a cycle — it's shown from the POV of a camera tossed down a hill). Later Deafula stalks a black dude and spooks a gal in her bedroom.

In the movie's die idea of comic relief, a nitwit local cop checks out a blood-drained corpse and brilliantly announces, "Neck bites. I have no idea," while an inspector from Scotland Yard(?) suspects Steve (since the bonehead shows up near every murder scene), but is never allowed to finish signing a complete sentence. It's even more painful when the filmmakers take themselves seriously, such as during a flashback to the death of Steve's mom during childbirth, or when Steve learns that Dracula (played by producer Gary Holstrom) bit his pregnant mom and visits the legendary vampire's underground cave for a sanctimonious finale.

Most of the cast is deaf, but they sure aren't actors, and perform with all of the subtlety of William Shatner on Amys. Alternately inept, absurd and overwrought, this threadbare romp is a genuine horror to endure, since its novelty wears off after 15 minutes (and most of you will think I'm being particularly generous). Hell, I've watched faster paced Andy Warhol movies! Never as bizarre as I'd hoped, it's an excruciating 95 minutes of talent-barren Mutesploitation.

#### HANNIBAL BROOKS (J4HI; 1969).

Director Michael Winner has had a spotty career, ranging from oddball flicks in his UK homeland, to pure trash in the US. When he teamed up with the lovably-excessive Oliver Reed, the results were usually impressive, in films like *THE GIRL GETTERS* and *THE JOKERS*. For this WWII comedy, Winner even paired Ollie with one of America's more eccentric actors, Michael J. Pollard, so the results are bound to be memorable, right? Well, I'm sure several gallons of beer were tossed back after the cameras stopped, but the on-screen antics are disappointingly limp.

Reed plays our little deadbeat, Hannibal Brooks, a British soldier who's been taken captive by the Germans and gets a cushy work detail at a Munich zoo. Suddenly he's in charge of the care, feeding and shit-shoveling for an elephant named Lucy, and quickly bonds with the creature. When this zoo is bombed by the Allies and Lucy's longtime keeper is killed, she has to be evacuated — which means Brooks has to walk the animal to safety across the Bavarian countryside. Reed spends much of the movie talking to Lucy, riding her during happy musical segues and looking quite confused (or possibly, just hung over) by this pathetic role as a softhearted animal lover.

Pollard plays Private Packy, a resourceful US P.O.W. who's continually planning his escape. For much of the movie, Michael J. (complete with hippie-length sideburns, which were obviously all the rage for WWII G.I.'s) is a secondary character who pops up whenever he's needed to save the day, as its script's lucky-but-unlikely idea of an action hero. Meanwhile, when Brooks' drunken German guard threatens to shoot the elephant, rebellious Hannibal decides to lead Lucy, himself, a sexy blonde, a nice German traitor, and eventually Packy (who has somehow amassed a small band of deserters and escapees) to the safety of Switzerland.

Unfortunately, this has none of the anarchic energy of earlier Winner/Reed efforts, and as this pachyderm becomes the center of the story, it begins to resemble a Disney nature flick. Sure, the script occasionally hits paydirt with an absurdity-of-war moment (a la *KELLY'S HEROES*), but there aren't enough of them to balance the boredom. When it isn't nose-deep in animal hijinx (such as Lucy getting the mumps), Packy attacks a German convoy, Brooks is captured and Lucy lends some brute force to its absurd conclusion. It's unique, but not very good, and I almost felt sorry for Reed, until I remembered all of the dreck he appeared in over the years. At least this big studio gig earned him a halfway decent paycheck.

It's an adventure story.  
It's a suspense story.  
It's a comedy story.  
It's a war story.  
It's a warm story.  
It's a wild story.  
It's a love story.  
It's a moving story.  
It's an elephant story.  
It's a super story.



And I'm  
the hero.



dick (even a dumpy vacuum cleaner salesman will do), but no one will satisfy her desires — this is, until her membership is accepted and two studs are dispatched to pleasure her. Unfortunately, flaccid Stan comes home early, and Laura again has to explain that she was simply being raped for the umpteenth time.

When Stan finally gets wind of Laura's sex-mad "appetites," he grabs a rifle and goes Charles Whitman on anyone who tries to seduce her! Of course, Laura simply informs her sniper-hubbie, "If you're going to kill every man I go to bed with, we're going to have a very unhappy marriage." Meanwhile, wanton wenches try to seduce Stan, as he's reluctantly sucked into this decadent world, which leads to gleeful murder, sexual traumas, two handy undertakers, spent cops, topless lesbian harlots, and catfights. Dimesize sleaze doesn't get any more ridiculous than this!

Powerful (and insatiable) women might rule the story, but don't think this is some type of feminist tract. There are bare tits galore, while director Manuel S. Conde (who also produced twisted-erotic fare like *DEEP JAWS* and *THE ALL-AMERICAN GIRL*) plays it primarily for bizarre laughs. Starring plenty of pseudonymed gals, such as "Banana Peel" and "Belly Boop," and photographed by Gregory Sandor (who later shot cult flicks like *SISTERS* and *FORBIDDEN ZONE*), this is a wonderfully seedy outing, awash in lovably overripe dialogue, fetishism and blissful stupidity.

#### INCHON (1982).

This summer, *PEARL HARBOR* was denounced as one of the most insipid war films ever made. That might be true, but I doubt any of these critics ever suffered through the utter foolishness of *INCHON*, Reverend Sun Myung Moon's overblown tribute to the 1950 U.N. operation (led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur) that repelled a North Korean invasion into Seoul's port of Inchon. This \$48 million production took more than a year to film, and then grossed a whopping \$150,000!

The producers certainly sucked a lot of talent into this epic-sized turd. Behind the camera was director Terence Young (*DR. NO*) and scripter/novelist Robin Moore (*THE FRENCH CONNECTION*), while its inept scenario is acted out by Jacqueline Bisset, Ben Gazzara, Kurosawa vet Toshiro Mifune, David Janssen as a cynical journalist, Truity Rex Reed playing a prissy reporter, plus SHAFT himself, Richard Roundtree! And who would be your most misguided choice to play the macho MacArthur? How about short, frail, 73-year-old Sir Laurence Olivier! But first, let's triple-coat his face with pasty make-up, dye his hair jet-black and grease it to a hard sheen, and give him a comb-over that begins an inch above his ear. Back then, Olivier was constantly signing onto dreck like *THE BETSY* and *THE JAZZ SINGER*, but this is unquestionably his most pathetic paycheck.

Following a brief intro to the origins of the Korean War, this invasion begins, with Bisset and Gazzara playing an estranged couple. He's currently hot for a young Korean cutie, whose papa is played by Mifune. Separated by these evil Red Army war mongers, soldiers Gazzara and Roundtree dress up as Korean peasants in order to lead undercover raids, while Bisset (wearing a low-cut summer frock, of course) tries to make it to safety and ends up playing mom to a carload of "adorable" Korean children. Soon MacArthur is brought in to save the day, and when Olivier struts around with his corn-cob pipe, oversized General's cap and sunglasses, "America's greatest soldier" looks more like George Burns playing MacArthur for a Bob Hope special. As he plans his defense, Gazzara and Bisset reignite their romantic sparks — just in time for Ben to ditch her again for a pivotal mission that'll insure the Good Guys' success at Inchon and a puke-inducing patriotic epilogue.

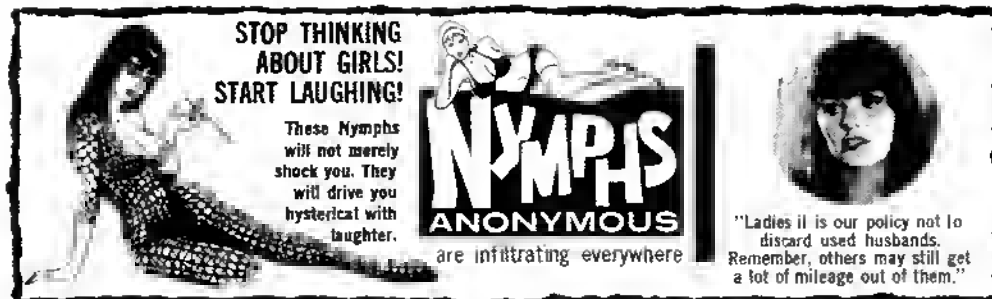
Released in the US at 106 minutes, with Janssen's role deleted after his 1980 death, my copy turned out to be the original, overbloated 139-minute cut! The B-movie battle scenes are impressive in scale, with lots of tanks, planes and soldiers, but they lack dramatic weight. Of course, the film is as unapologetically anti-North Korean as any old WWII flick was anti-Nazi, as the vile Commies slaughter innocent women and children by the dozen. The actors are surprisingly earnest in the face of such hokum, and most of the cast was paid in cash, since the budget was funneled through Moon's Unification Church (still, few admit to ever knowing that the project was directly connected to this self-confessed "messiah"). Meanwhile, Moon's loyal followers were ordered to praise it to no end (shades of *BATTLEFIELD: EARTH*). This is a sad and stupid movie, full of combat good intentions by its Korean backers, but devoid of entertainment value — that is, unless you're turned on by slumming actors and interchangeable battle scenes.

STOP THINKING  
ABOUT GIRLS!  
START LAUGHING!

These Nymphs  
will not merely  
shock you. They  
will drive you  
hysterical with  
laughter.

**NYMPHS  
ANONYMOUS**  
are infiltrating everywhere

"Ladies it is our policy not to  
discard used husbands.  
Remember, others may still get  
a lot of mileage out of them."



#### NYMPHS ANONYMOUS (Something Weird Video; 1968).

It's always fun to indulge in some old-fashioned, b&w grindhouse fodder, and this groovy, emulsion-scratched gem is worth a look even if you're not a big fan of '60s sexploitation. With an emphasis on absurd concepts and crazy humor, it also boasts the innocent sexiness of an old nudie loop, complete with cheap lingerie, garters, high heels, unsiliconed jugs, and guys who refuse to take off their socks.

The little refers to a secret society of female nymphomaniacs, led by a loxy brunette named Doreen, who has male servants perpetually fawning over her. In a cheaply-paneled living room, they plot their sexual exploits and look for new recruits, as a frustrated wife named Laura comes to their attention. She wants loving, but her muscle-bound hubby Stan is more concerned about getting to work on time than schtupping this see-thru-nighlited babe. She's primed to leap onto any stiff

## BEASTS (1976).

Written by QUATERMASS-creator Nigel Kneale, this British anthology never found its way to US TV-screens. Consisting of six 50-minute episodes, each offered a self-standing tale revolving around some vague creature — from real animals and eerie monsters, to the beastliness of the human condition. It's horrific little is also somewhat deceptive, since each mini-drama ranges wildly in terms of tone, storytelling and overall success. In fact, their only shared qualities are (1) they were all obviously filmed as cheaply as possible, and (2) most display a skillfully-scripted intelligence that's all too rare in today's mind-numbing fare.

The series kicked off nicely with "During Barty's Party" (10/22/76), in which a husband (Anthony Bate) and wife (Elizabeth Sellars) hear something scratching under their home's floorboards. The cause seems to be a rat, but as the noises continue and multiply, she's scared shillee and once-skeptical hubby soon joins the club. The two-characters-trapped-in-one-location set-up is simple, and as tensions rise (and the phone and power lines go out) they're both finally convinced that their home is under rodent invasion. Meanwhile, the title refers to a radio show the couple listen to for updates on this local "rat migration." Director Don Taylor — who continued to work with beasts in feature work, including apes (ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES), mutant animals (THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU) and Oliver Reed (THE GREAT SCOUT AND CATHOUSE THURSDAY) — skillfully generates suspense without showing any real violence, or even one actual rat. It's intense, simple and pretty damned grim.

Sophomore slump is evident in "Buddyboy" (10/29/76), which tries to transform a cute dolphin into a sinister force. Good fuckin' luck! The owner of a closed-aquarium hopes to sell his building to a couple sleazeballs (including a pre-THE PROFESSIONALS Martin Shaw) who manage The Peek-A-Boo Club, and want to turn this rundown building into a sexy nightspot. But the nervous owner is also obsessed by memories of his star dolphin, The Amazing Buddyboy, as is a female squatter (Pamela Moisewitsch) who has an even closer connection to this lead mammal. Eventually, they uncover the mystery behind Buddyboy's demise, as (BRADY BUNCH-permed) Shaw takes a liking to this dolphin-fetish chick. Although vaguely perverse for '70s TV, with the exception of some gratuitous topless babe shots, there's little to recommend. Director Don Taylor keeps it dull and tacky, and while acted with all seriousness, it's difficult not to chuckle when characters are haunted by dolphin noises. Of course, the only dolphins this no-budgeter could provide are in archive clips.

With "Baby" (11/5/76), Kneale was back on track with a creepy, unpredictable psychodrama that taps into our fear of the unknown. Jane Wymark and Simon MacCorkindale (MANIMAL) star as young marrieds who're renovating an old country cottage. She's pregnant and he's an idiot, so when they uncover a strange urn, long buried inside a wall, he promptly opens it and discover a dead, infant-sized animal that has fur, claws and is twisted into a fetal position. Dubbing this unidentifiable oddity a "farmyard monster," he becomes increasingly fascinated by the thing, even as his infinitely more-sympathetic wife turns into a paranoid wreck and fears for her unborn child. Of course, the old townfolk realize that this shriveled whatzit is a sinister sign, and our mother-to-be is soon seeing and hearing things. The hokey final fight is rather pathetic (the FX crew must've spent a whopping £5 on paper-mache and fur), but everything else is top-notch, headed by skillful performances and a good deal of suspense courtesy of director John Nelson Burton.

"What Big Eyes" (11/12/76) takes a different route, beginning as a mystery about the fate of rare animals. Michael Kitchen stars as a gung-ho animal inspector who's suspicious when a seedy importer reports selling Eastern European timber wolves to a local pet shop. Investigating, he meets the store's owner, Leo Raymond (bearded Patrick Magee), who's a nasty old crackpot scientist. Raymond soon invites the young inspector into his lab, admits to his vivisection of these imported wolves, as well as radical theories about lycanthropy and ancient memories locked within DNA — which can transform human into beast. It sounds like a werewolf ALTERED STATES! He even incorporates Red Riding Hood into his ramblings (hence its title), as these experiments lead to madness and a sad denouement. Director Donald McWhinnie needed a first-rate actor to pull off this crazed role, and intense Magee is both brilliant and believable as a nutcase/genius overflowing with hilariously half-baked theories. The drama might be thin, but Magee keeps it worthwhile.

One of the most ingenious episodes was "The Dummy" (11/19/76), which mixed beasts both real and fictional. Its setting is a TV-studio that's filming the latest installment of "The Dummy" horror franchise. Their little creature is an 8-foot-tall, lumpy, animal-vegetable-mineral monster which wouldn't be out of place in a threadbare DR. WHO episode. But on-set trouble erupts when Clyde (Bernard Horsfall), the sweaty guy in the rubber suit, freaks out when he learns that the smug asshole who ran off with his wife is also working on the movie. After Clyde's alcoholic breakdown, the manipulative producer (Clive Swift) decides to fire the poor guy, but needs him for one last take. Once encased in his Dummy regalia, the man inside the monster goes on a real-life rampage, resulting in soundstage destruction and murder. Director Don Leaver keeps it engrossing, disturbing and even touching, and while using a horror movie production as the plot of a horror movie is a savvy conceit on its own, Kneale also sneaks in plenty of digs at showbiz egotism and mindgames.

Just barely fitting within its beastly framework, "Special Offer" (11/26/76) relies as much on sly humor as suspense. Directed by Richard Bramall, the setting is an ordinary grocery store. While the horny manager (Geoffrey Bateman) can't keep his mitts off of a curvaceous cashier, a dowdy, overweight teen-employee named Noreen (Pauline Quirke) is always present at unexplainable mishaps. There's definitely something weird going on in this shop, as canned goods fly off the shelves, and Noreen blames it on some unseen "animal" nicknamed Billy (after the market's bunny mascot). As the chaos escalates and the employees panic, it's obvious to us who's to blame — it's a UK knock-off of CARRIE (which was published two-years earlier)! Soon downtrodden, rotten-looking Noreen is taking out her secret aggressions via telekinetic rage, and when questioned too intently about "Billy," the store is suddenly torn apart (imagine DePalma's high school prom finale on a tiny, bodega scale). Complete with a tragic end, it's a fitting caper to this sadly-forgotten series.

## CRAZY JOE (1974).

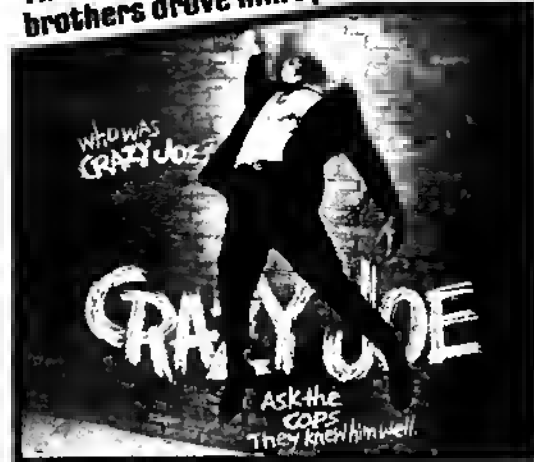
Whaddaya know, it's a Fred Williamson movie that I've never gotten around to reviewing! Of course, The Hammer is only 3rd-billed in this crime bio-pic from producer Dino DeLaurentis and director Carlo Lizzani (TEENAGE PROSTITUTION RACKET). Instead, EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND's Peter Boyle stars in the role of lovably unhinged NYC mobster "Crazy" Joey Gallo, with an all-star supporting cast backing him up.

Mixing the epic scope of THE GODFATHER with the unsavory excess of Italian gangster outings, this rise-'n'-fall story begins in 1960, with volatile, loud-mouthed "soldier" Joe butting heads with mob leaders, who don't give Gallo the respect (he thinks) he deserves. Joey becomes a sudden neighborhood hero after saving children from a fire, but the guy still has the feds on his ass, crime kingpins pissed off at him, and eventually winds up in the slammer. There, well past the movie's midpoint, he meets Fred Williamson as cellblock neighbor Willie (lovingly called "Mau Mau" by the ever-lactful Joe). By 1970, the mob is becoming more legit, while Joe is still behind bars, reading Camus and quieting a mini-revolt led by the hot-headed Hammer. But when he's finally free, Gallo makes his bid for power, with Willie's muscle backing him up — never suspecting who'll stab him in the back, or in his case, gun the slob down.

Boyle is currently a sitcom celeb, but a few decades ago, he could be unpredictably electric in fare like JOE, TAXI DRIVER and WHERE THE BUFFALO ROAM. For this gig, he rips loose amongst lots of familiar faces including a pre-Fonz Henry Winkler as a mob pal, Herve Villechaize is Joe's "bodyguard" Samson, Eli Wallach as an elderly Don, Cornelia Sharpe playing a Hollywood babe, Paula Prentiss in a thankless turn as Joe's mistress, plus Michael V. Gazzo (THE GODFATHER, PART II). Let's not forget Rip Torn as Joe's level-headed brother Richie. Rip is relatively subdued compared to his outrageous turns in PAYDAY and COMING APART, but still squeezes a couple prime moments into his brief stint.

The script by Lewis John Carino (who'd already penned mob movies like THE BROTHERHOOD and HONOR THY FATHER) focuses on a few interesting sideroads, such as allegiances with the Black mob and internal conflicts within the syndicate, even as Lizzani's direction is like a club — unstylish but effective. Still, the movie often displays a spontaneous energy thanks to authentic locales, plenty of low-grade grit, and a live-wire cast who've been let loose without restraints.

His crazy ways had the family climbing walls. Then one night his blood brothers drove him up it!



DINO DE LAURENTIS PRESENTS PETER BOYLE PAULA PRENTISS FRED WILLIAMSON RIP TORN CHARLES GOTT "CRAZY JOE" Story by ELI WALLACH Screenplay by LEWIS JOHN CARINO Based on a script by CARLO LIZZANI Directed by CARLO LIZZANI A S.P. Production A Columbia Pictures Production A Columbia Pictures Production Inc. Release Date: 1974

## THE TROUBLEMAKER (Shocking Videos; 1984).

This lightweight cult comedy uses NYC's burgeoning Greenwich Village scene as a b&w backdrop for plenty of sledgehammer social satire. The film's creative core were veterans of a '60s Off-Broadway improv group called "The Premise," and although this effort didn't impress many viewers, most of them went on to more acclaimed (and lucrative) work. Director Theodore Flicker made THE PRESIDENT'S ANALYST and co-created BARNEY MILLER, co-scripter Buck Henry adapted THE GRADUATE and CATCH-22, actress Joan Darling became one of TV's first female directors with MARY HARTMAN, MARY HARTMAN, and actor James Frawley also moved behind the camera and directed THE MUPPET MOVIE and episodes of THE MONKEES.



**IN GREENWICH  
VILLAGE  
ANYTHING  
CAN  
HAPPEN—  
AND  
USUALLY  
DOES!**



**The Troublemaker**

Directed by Theodore J. Flicker  
Written by Buck Henry and Theodore J. Flicker  
Music by Cy Coleman  
Produced by Robert Gallwey for Olympiasa Seneca  
Distributed by Janus Films

**8th ST. PLAYHOUSE**

French tuff starts out on an amusing note, but quickly wears out its welcome. Sure, it's caked with silly, generic crime/spy nonsense, but the dimwitted result will only be amusing if Maff Helm movies are a bit too intellectual for your taste.

CAMILLE 2000's Danièle Gaubert stars as our curvaceous Cal Girl, Francoise, who, by day is a sexy redheaded real estate agent (and ex-trapeze artist). But at night she squeezes into her skin-tight attire and mask in order to pull off ballsy burglaries of palatial estates — one of them literally over people's heads, thanks to her high-wire, acrobatic expertise. In this woefully-dubbed print, the police have labeled her the "she-wolf," with Francoise's lifestyle taking an unexpected twist when she's captured by the cops and reluctantly agrees (in order to avoid the slammer) to use her skills to help them with a high-profile drug bust. The authorities also hire an expert lip-reader named Bruno (Michel Duchaussoy) to join her on this dull assignment, and (gosh, I couldn't predict this outcome!) the romantic sparks begin to fly. Is Francoise planning her own double cross? Absolutely, but this only leads to abduction, seduction, a low-grade rooftop tussle, and cheaply-lensed tedium.

Director Edouard Logereau occasionally stumbles upon some sexy, groovy moments (such as gratuitous nightclub gyrating), but mostly settles for cheapjack EuroCrime shenanigans. He's a hack. Thankfully, sultry Gaubert (who was married to ski-master Jean-Claude Killy, and passed away in '87) is an eyelid, and if not for her, I would've hit "eject" long before the end credits. Her character is brilliant, beautiful, makes the cops look like morons, and definitely deserves better material than this monumentally inane foolishness. Thank god it's only 91 minutes.

**DEMON LOVER DIARY (Shocking Videos; 1980).**

In the Fall of 1975, cameraman Jeff Kreines was hired to shoot a silly little horror romp called DEMON LOVER in the middle of Michigan, and his female pal Joel DeMott joined him on the trip, documenting this adventure into no-budget filmmaking with her own handy camera. Her ragged footage was later lashed together into

Set in "an unidentified city" (after we see the Statue of Liberty...I told you the jokes were obvious), Tom Aldredge stars as Jack Armstrong, a klutzy, naive ex-chicken farmer who moves to Manhattan with the dream of opening his own coffee-house. He rents a rundown storefront in a shitty neighborhood and starts to renovate the place, but immediately runs into every form of local corruption.

Meanwhile, Buck Henry plays an old college chum who's now a high-priced scumbag lawyer, and handles all of Jack's government payola. Darting co-stars as Denver James, a sweet chick who falls for this dweeb, goateed Flicker shows up as the Crime Commissioner, while Frawley has fun in three different roles: A mobster landlord who rips off Armstrong, his slow-witted cop-brother and a corrupt judge. Refusing to give in, this "troublemaker" is committed to a mental hospital, escapes and eventually takes on The System — complete with three different endings (with varying degrees of cynicism).

Obviously, Armstrong is supposed to be a good soul in the middle of urban evil and hostility, but he's so insufferably wholesome that I couldn't stomach the guy. His zany gags and incessant mugging falls flat and he's a one-man comedy fiasco. Hey, at least the movie was a terrific springboard for the supporting cast, with Godfrey Cambridge earning the biggest laughs as a greedy Fire Commissioner (complete with an Irish brogue), Al Freeman Jr. as a hospital intern, and I'd swear I spotted Village-icon Tiny Tim in a split-second cameo as a "Liberal Nazi Party" protester. Broadway composer Cy Coleman (SWEET CHARITY) was even hit up to write the score. Fueled by the wonderfully nostalgic idea that NYC is corrupt in every way, this eccentric little item has funny moments sprinkled throughout, but they rarely involve the central storyline.

**THE GOLDEN CLAW OF CAT-GIRL [La Louve Solitaire] (ETC; 1968).**

Here's something you don't see every day — a distaff rip-off of Mario Bava's mind-blowing DANGER: DIABOLIK, on a small-traction of the original's budget. This

this legendary documentary, which has finally been snuck onto video. The father of modern hits such as AMERICAN MOVIE, it's an insightful, funny and scary peek into the making of an indie flick and its delusional, self-laughing filmmakers.

From the moment Kreines arrives, his bosses (factory-workers-turned-auteurs Don Jackson and Jerry Younkens) are pissed off. The pair are 98% ego and 2% talent, and while they boast to local reporters that they've spent two years planning this film, their production is about as tightly formed as a beer shit. Kreines doesn't make any friends by pointing out their "consistent stupidity," even as DeMott captures it all on-camera. Jackson continually wants to run Kreine's personal camera, even though he knows jack about cinematography. The ditzzy actresses can't remember their lines. DeMott and Kreines have to room with Don's mom, and due to the old gal's religious beliefs, they can't mention that her son is making a horror movie. Meanwhile, dorky Younkens (and his waist-length hair) is starring as the demonic lead and constantly whines that their masterpiece "looks like shit."

Kreines and sound man Mark Rance have honest-to-goodness technical skills, and for a while the trio can only laugh about this absurd gig, as Rance hills on one of the flick's cutesy while-trash actresses. Ms. DeMott's occasional voice-over connects the rough footage, with grim info about the co-directors (the production was initially financed with \$8,000 of insurance money, after Younkens conveniently cut off his finger on the job; Jackson mortgaged everything his family owns, in hopes of making a fortune), as well as her own growing frustrations. But the production takes a nasty turn when the crew visits Ted Nugent's home(!) and borrows real guns and ammo for a scene. When Kreines draws up a contract, in hopes of getting paid what he was promised (god forbid!), tempers erupt and the trio flee Michigan, tearful of heavily-armed tanboys seeking retribution.

Although DeMott's camera is always running, these filmmakers don't seem too worried about looking like amateurish nerds in the middle of hissy fits; probably because they never imagined that this footage would someday be a movie that's a hundred times more entertaining than DEMON LOVER — which, hard to believe, was actually finished and (barely) released. Even more amazing, despite his proven lack of talent, Don Jackson continued directing, from highlights like HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN to low points such as LINGERIE KICKBOXER.

**THE STRANGE VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE (Shocking Videos; 1972).**

The late, great director Jack Starrett was a drive-in icon, with beer-guzzling classics such as SLAUGHTER, THE LOSERS and CLEOPATRA JONES under his belt. This was one of his more self-consciously 'serious' flicks — a desert psychodrama featuring a wacko hick-chick and her city-hunk hostage. Lensed in Spain (which poses as New Mexico), the result is one seriously irritating endeavor.

In one of her earliest roles, future Oscar-nominee Bonnie Bedelia plays Rosalie, a lonely American Indian teen who snags a ride from big blonde traveling salesman Virgil (CROSSING JORDAN papa Ken Howard). She lures him to her remote shack, and this dunce doesn't realize he's in trouble until Rosalie fractures his leg, so he can't leave. That's the film in a nutshell. She's a dim-witted, willful, barefoot bitch in a tattered potato-sack, who's searching for a man to make her life complete — even if she had to cripple him in the process. Meanwhile, her pissed-off guest isn't much smarter, particularly when Rosalie's talk about her dead grandpa's gold has him greedy for more info. Virgil eventually tries to turn the tables on this teenage-tormentor by allowing her to crawl into bed with him (oh, what a sacrifice!), but their conflict has all the transparency of a bad Off-Off-Broadway play.

Thank goodness for Anthony Zerbe (THE OMEGA MAN), who spices up this two-character tripe. Playing a grubby, greasy longhaired biker named Fry, he pops up midway through, lusting after the treasure that's been hidden by Gramps, as well as the one in between Rosalie's thighs. This "stupid ape" is vastly more entertaining than the two leads, but is given far too little screen time.

Starrett's direction is workmanlike, but he's unable to overcome the project's basic flaws. While Rosalie occasionally exudes a crude sexiness (such as when she buys a hilariously-gaudy new wardrobe in town), this needy, willful, emotionally stunted l'il thing is also as dim as a refrigerator bulb. Another big problem is the casting: the script by Anthony Greville-Hall and John Kohn refers to Rosalie as a minor, and while 20-year-old Bedelia might be a bit waifish, she's obviously no kid. If she was, her grating role might've been more tolerable. Of course, Ken Howard is no help, since he has all the charisma of a 6-foot Chicken McNugget. This half-baked hokum was eventually tossed onto the double-bill circuit in the US, paired with the equally eccentric WHAT BECAME OF JACK AND JILL?



STRANGE VENGEANCE OF ROSALIE  
Starring BONNIE BEDELIA, KEN HOWARD, ANTHONY ZERBE  
Directed by JACK STARRETT Produced by JOHN KOHN  
Screenplay by ANTHONY GREVILLE-BELL and JOHN KOHN  
Based on "CHICKEN" by MILES TRAPP

**THE LAST WOMAN (Luminous; 1976).**

Director Marco Ferreri has never shied away from weird and controversial territories, and this — one of his most notorious films — is alternately turbulent, erotic, touching, and extremely fucked-up. No love story is simple in a Ferreri film, and this French-Italian production gave new meaning to the term dysfunctional when first released. Alas, nowadays this battle of the sexes feels a wee bit stale.

Gerard Depardieu (back when you could almost see why the French considered him a sex symbol) stars as factory worker Giovanni, a single father with a chubby infant son, who's temporarily laid off from his job. Sultry Ornella Muti shares top-billing as school teacher Valeria, who dumps her middle-aged beau (Michel Piccoli) in order to spend her vacation in bed with horny, ill-mannered Giovanni instead. The problem? Valeria is instantly smitten with this unrepentant womanizer and suddenly moves in with father and son, despite Giovanni's protests.

It's that age-old old story: He loves her, he hates her, he fucks her, he needs to possess her, but then he promptly runs off to the nearest mall and hits on anything with a vagina. Giovanni is brimming with contradictions — on the surface, he's a macho shit-head with no self-control, but discovers he's terrified when Valeria plans to leave him. The guy never thinks about the consequences of his actions, and while he proclaims his undying love for Valeria, he'll happily dip his wick into any warm crevice and is unable to deal with this modern, liberated woman.

Their conflict leads to one of Ferreri's more accessible, least outrageous works — at least until the finale, when a handy electric carving knife makes for a painfully absurd self-castration. Mind you, this scene is too brief and non-graphic for thrill-seeking exploitation fans, but it'll still leave most guys squirming...21-year-old Muti was often type-cast as the 'object of obsession' (e.g. TALES OF ORDINARY MADNESS), but for a change, she plays the relatively-sane half of this couple. And while this Euro-Knockout is occasionally nude, it's Gerard who (unfortunately) gets the majority of the film's bare-assed screen time, and even a quarter-century ago the guy had a substantial wine gut. Both have a lot of charisma, and this meandering movie needs all it can get. It's mildly engaging, with a reputation stronger than the actual film.

**BLOOD IN THE STREETS (Just For the Hell of It; 1975).**

Oliver Reed became a bankable star in acclaimed films such as WOMEN IN LOVE and THE THREE MUSKETEERS. Then, like any smart drunk, he took the money and ran — turning his success into a long list of highly-paid, horrendous movies including VENOM, SPASMS, CONDORMAN, and many more. Although not nearly as wretched as the aforementioned duds, this German-French-Italian revenge melodrama from director Sergio Sollima (known for spaghetti westerns like FACE TO FACE and THE BIG GUN-DOWN) is bloody, low-grade fare.

Mustached Reed plays hard-boiled Milan prison warden, Vito Cipriani, with Agostina Belli adding welcome visual allure as Anna, his young wife. But Vito's always-in-command world is turned upside-down when Anna is kidnapped, and he's informed that she'll be tortured and mutilated unless he releases a petty thief named Milo (Fabio Testi) from his prison. Oddly enough, Milo doesn't even know who arranged this complex hostage scenario.

Vito eventually aids in Milo's escape, and together this odd couple tries to track down the men who're holding Vito's missus. The convoluted plot some includes assassinated politicians, a tired conspiracy and a pop star who's into crime, dope and passing his young groupies onto rich old tarts.

Together Vito and Milo steal cars, sneak across borders and are pursued by hell-copers — with the upper hand dependent on who has possession of the lone gun.

Lensed under the more esoteric title of THE REVOLVER (which only makes sense during the last couple minutes), the script occasionally aspires toward larger

Love. Hate. Loneliness. Humor. Sensuality.  
Nothing will prepare you for the devastating climax.



themes, such as the corruption of truth and the use of violence, but even those moments end up ham-handed. There's no strain on Reed's acting abilities here, since all he does is look tough, pummel supporting characters, and get beaten up so frequently that it becomes laughable. Fabio Testi is as brawny and bland as always, even after his thick-headed character realizes he's just a pawn; while Italian sex kitten Belli (THE SEX MACHINE) has little to do after her early nude scene, except get abused and plead for her freedom. Despite a fair amount of crude action and bloodshed, it's a very long 109-minute ride.

**THE OTHER SIDE (Video Search of Miami; 1990).**

First things first. The director of this alleged-comedy is Peter Bergman, but if this is the same guy who collaborated on the uproarious Firesign Theatre and J-MEN FOREVER, then he must've had a lobotomy before agreeing to this sad, cut-rate production. After digging through every Peter Bergman/Firesign Theatre site on the web, with no mention of this obscure turd, I'll wager that this tick's 'auteur' is another Peter Bergman altogether — or more likely, an American-sounding pseudonym.

Its basic plot lacks any comic potential. When the late Andy Warhol is spotted at various NYC lambada nightspots, a reporter named Jimmy Lowson (Larry Carver) is sent to investigate. He instantly falls in love with a dance floor sexpot (Lisa Hambley), just as Warhol (a guy in a white wig, who looks *nothing* like the actual guy) lures her into a stretch limo and she turns up dead the next day. As Lowson becomes obsessed with this mystery, he continues to frequent

this club, is framed for another murder, and becomes convinced that this Warhol-wannabe is to blame. Granite-jawed Robert Z'Dar is the only name value, and receives star billing for a tiny role as a gangster who frequents the nightclub, acts tough, but mostly just stands around. Obviously it was a one-day gig.

This is supposed to be set in Manhattan, but I didn't buy it. Sure, there are a few grainy shots of Times Square and CBGB's, but most of it is set inside one dismal excuse for a nightclub, which has all of the class of a Brazilian crackhouse. It looks like the crew had \$100 for props, and spent most of it on smack instead. This patchwork concoction even has the balls to incorporate actual footage of Warhol — stolen from some old interview show — into a dream sequence.

As if the central story weren't painful enough, the movie's punctuated by lengthy, stupefying stretches of amateurish lambada dancing and droning music. Did I laugh? I didn't smile once throughout this cinematic sinkhole, and scripters Mike Ketchel and Maci Celli (who also appear in this fiasco) should be beaten with a sock full of quarters. It's a complete waste of their film stock and your time.

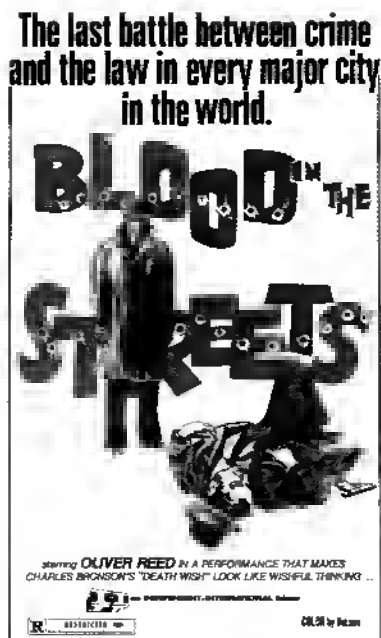
**SPIKE OF LOVE (1994).**

This fearlessly-demented, low-budget Canadian oddity slipped through the cracks, and it's about time it received some long-overdue praise. A spectacularly unpredictable mix of horror, violence, black comedy, and mind-blowing twists, it's the '90s answer to SPIDER BABY. Set entirely inside a demented Toronto basement-apartment, during one extremely fucked-up night, this proves that director Steve DiMarco (best known for bland TV-work like DUE NORTH) is one sick pup.

It begins like a deranged Cinemax After-Dark reject, as an insatiable slut named Jane (Dyanne DiMarco) lures middle-aged businessman Harold (Ron Lea) to her kinky sexpad. But he's soon taken hostage when two psychotic moron-brothers — dim-witted Donny (Tony Munch) and hyper-religious Clem (Gerry Quigley) — show up with a freshly chopped-off human head. The door is locked, the windows are barred and it's time for a family freak-out! They threaten to burn poor Harold with a blow torch, or maybe just hack off his head, but end up leaving this pudgy pick-up bound and gagged, as they go about their business. You see, tonight they're in deep shit with a local gang for their unscheduled beheading, and have until midnight to pay up. How'd they get so deranged? Wait until you meet Mama!

These guys might be vicious, but they're also nearly retarded (at least Clem has an excuse, due to the plate in his head), which leads to some spectacularly asinine moments, such as when the two strap on Army helmets with 2-foot-long spikes on the front of 'em and run at each other, playing chicken. Meanwhile, Jane is continually posing in kinky lingerie and dominatrix garb, and while she's supposed to be Donny's girl, she'll hump any penis that comes through the door. The final half-hour goes totally nuts, with the entrance of a renegade cop, self-crucifixion, a potential skinning, a one-eyed lesbo bitch, a vicious gang-leader with a red rubber jump-suit and voicebox, and (of course) that handy 'spike of love'.

Reminiscent of tucked-up family classics like THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, crossed with a maniacal Three Stooges, this claustrophobic tale only gets darker as it progresses. Best of all, its corpse-laden, apothecosis-ending left me slack-jawed. What the HELL were they thinking? This might be crude and overwrought, but it's also a one-of-a-kind chamber piece, full of crazed intentions and characters. I only wish all Canadian films were this unrepentantly warped.

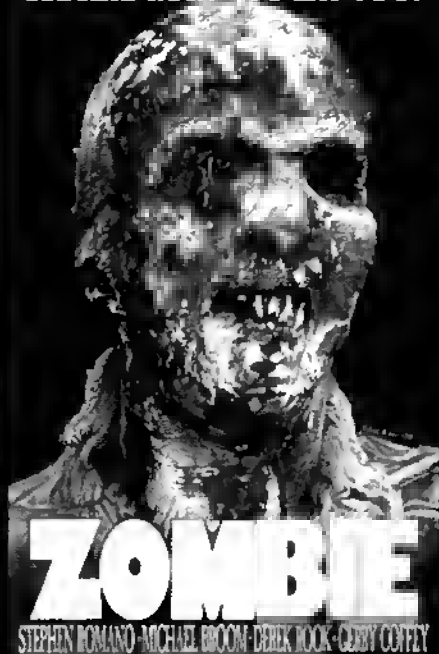


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# STAYING IN CHARACTER: An Interview With Actor DON GORDON

By STEVE RYFLE

There's a scene in *SLAUGHTER* (1972) where Don Gordon tries out his best pickup lines on busy Stella Stevens. He bumbles, mumbles and stumbles to get the words out, only to watch the bikini-clad babe pick up her ample T&A and plop them down in front of big Jim Brown instead. While Jim ignites Stella's jungle fever, we see the forlorn Gordon in the background, twiddling his thumbs while the leading man gets the girl.

It's a scene that's simultaneously typical and atypical of Gordon's 50-year-long career in movies and TV. Typical because it exemplifies his talents as a great character actor, a consummate pro, and a supporting player who always makes the stars around him look great. Atypical because in *SLAUGHTER*, Gordon played the good-natured buddy cop, whereas much of his career was spent playing villains, small-time crooks and just plain mean SOB's — something he does quite well, mind you.

Gordon has appeared in more than 200 television shows, dating back to the live broadcast days of the 1950's. In the 1960's, he did stints on some of the greatest shows of the day, including two episodes of *THE OUTER LIMITS*, *ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS*, *THE UNTOUCHABLES*, and he got an Emmy nomination for an episode of *THE DEFENDERS* called "The Madman." He's often remembered for playing the titular role in "The Self-Improvement of Salvatore Ross," a famous *TWILIGHT ZONE* episode directed by Don Siegel. In the 1970's and '80s, he made the rounds on *CHARLIE'S ANGELS*, *LOVE BOAT*, *VEGAS*, *MACGYVER*. You name the show, Gordon probably did it.

And Gordon has played so many memorable parts in movies...Steve McQueen's sidekick in *BULLITT*...the breast-squeezing, corrupt cop in *THE MACK*...Salan's sidekick in *THE FINAL CONFLICT*. He's worked with just about everyone, from Jim Brown (*SLAUGHTER*) to Dennis Hopper (*THE LAST MOVIE*) to Mel Gibson (*LETHAL WEAPON*) to George C. Scott (*EXORCIST III*).

Don Gordon is one of those old pro's whose work ethic and attitude toward his craft seem anything but old — quite refreshing, actually — in this age of prima donnas. And, as we found out over lunch at one of his favorite Italian restaurants in West Los Angeles, he's a lot nicer in person than the badasses he often played.

**SC: You always seemed like a New York guy to me, but I read that you're actually an L.A. native.**

Don Gordon: I was born here [in Los Angeles], and then I went to New York when I was about five. My family were New Yorkers. And then they came back here, and went back to New York again, and then came back [to Los Angeles]. And then I entered the service when I was 15.

**SC: Did you forge your birth certificate?**

Gordon: I had just turned 15, but the youngest you could be was 17, and that was if you got your parents' permission, otherwise you had to be 18. So I took my birth certificate, and got some ink eradicator, and changed the date of my birth by one number and made myself 17 instead of 15.

**SC: Were you a patriotic kid, or did you just want to get out of the house?**

Gordon: The country had been attacked. My father was on Midway Island, working as a civilian. I don't know about patriotic, but I felt our country had been wronged and somebody had to right the wrong. I was only one of God-knows-how-many millions. I enlisted the day after Pearl Harbor, a Monday, after President Roosevelt's speech. I was in school. I listened to his speech, I got up, and the teacher said, "Where are you going?" And I just kept on going, never went back. Went to downtown L.A., and the street was filled with young men, old men, thousands of guys all trying to enlist. And we all enlisted. They knew I was young, but I had a birth certificate.



Don Gordon in *THE LOLLIPOP COVER*

**SC: Sounds like you were pretty strong-willed.**

Gordon: I don't know about that, but I've always known what I wanted, and whatever I wanted, I went after it. There's no point in screwing around. If you want something go for it. If you get it, great. If you don't, at least you tried. There's an old Spanish saying, "A life lived in fear is a life half-lived." So have no fear about anything, just go ahead and do whatever it is you want to do, outside of murdering people. I'm talking about personal ambition. Find that thing you love, and go get it. The worst that can happen is that you don't make it. This is a "would've, should've, could've" world. "Oh, I could've done that, I should've done that." I never believed in that, I always believed you just do it.

**SC: What was your tour of duty like?**

Gordon: I was in the South Pacific, all the way through the end of the war. I was on aircraft carriers. I was on the *Saratoga*, which was CV-3, the third carrier built in this country. And then I was on the *Yorktown*, which

was CV-10 — not the original *Yorktown*, which was sunk; this was a ship that was being built when I joined the Navy, and it was going to be called the *Bon Homme Richard*, the *Goodfellow Richard*. But when the original *Yorktown* was sunk, they decided to change it to the *Yorktown*, because it hadn't been christened yet. And I served on that until the end of the war. I have eleven major battle stars.

**SC: I guess you grow up fast in that situation.**

Gordon: When I was 15, I was taking care of airplanes. Pilots were depending on my skill as an Ordinance man, as to whether or not the guns would work on their biplanes. It's a big responsibility, but it was fun, you know.

**SC: When did you first get involved with acting?**

Gordon: I always wanted to be an actor. I got discharged at Long Beach, came back to L.A., and hitch-hiked across the U.S. to New York, stayed there a few days, then hitch-hiked back. I wanted to see the country. I was restless; I wanted to see what was going on. I didn't have much money, it was 1946. Then I got a job in L.A. putting together radios, and I went to drama school, which was a lot of nonsense. It was at Fairfax and Wilshire, in a building across from the big department store, a drama school called Geller Theater Workshop. If I'd had any brains, I would have gone to RADA [the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London], but I didn't even know about RADA then. The government paid. I was in what was called the 52/20 Club, in which the government would pay for your schooling if you had been in the service. They'd pay for a year, 52 weeks, and they'd give you \$20 a week to pay rent and live on. Now, \$20 a week in 1946 was a lot of money. For instance, when I lived in New York in '53, I rented a cold water flat on 14th Street on the west side for \$14 a month. That's not bad.

**SC: Now that would cost you \$2,000 easily. New York is outrageous today.**

Gordon: I know, but back in the fifties it was a livable city, it was fun. After 14th Street, I lived on 68th between Madison and Park, and then I lived on 67th. Great neighborhood. Television had just come in, and there was more work than you could possibly ever do.

**SC: Well, your first acting gig, I understand, was in a kids' show called SPACE PATROL.**

Gordon: That was something I did out here [in L.A.]. *SPACE PATROL* was what they called a "strip show," which was 15 minutes a day, five days a week, after school. I started that in 1948 or '49. There was no union, and I worked for five dollars a show — after every show, the guy would come around and give us a \$5 bill — and I played a character called Marcol, who was the heavy. I learned a lot. Then I joined a group and studied with Michael Chekhov, a brilliant teacher. And then I went to New York, and once I got there... the difference between L.A. and New York at that time was that you didn't need an agent in New York. You'd hear about things. All the actors used to hang out on the third floor of the RCA Building, which you can't get into now. There was this chimpanzee — what the hell

was his name? He used to be on the morning show. I hated the little bastard, because he used to roller-skate back and forth, and he would bite people. I told the guy who owned him, "If that little bastard ever bites me, I'll strangle him, I'll kill him." J. Fred Muggs, that was the name of the chimpanzee; he was on THE DAVE GARROWAY SHOW (NBC, 1953-54), and even Dave Garroway hated him. Anyhow, he used to hang out on the third floor. And then you'd heard about things. You knew all the shows — STUDIO ONE, KRAFT TELEVISION THEATER, ROBERT MONTGOMERY PRESENTS — you knew they were being done. You didn't need an agent, you could just go over to wherever they were casting the show, and see what's going on.

**SC: So many film icons got their start in the days of live TV. You must have brushed elbows with some legends.**  
Gordon: Just name them.

**SC: Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier, John Cassavetes, guys like that.**

Gordon: When I first met Johnny Cassavetes, he was the stage manager of a show that the woman I was married to was in. Sidney Poitier and I were, and are, friends. Paul Newman I knew. Marty Ritt gave me my first job off the street. I heard that Marty Ritt was doing a show — I think he was blacklisted at the time — and I went upstairs, into this little room. Marty handed me a piece of paper, I looked at it and did about three lines. He said, "You want the job?" It was that easy, that simple, there was no mystery. They needed actors, because television was just eating it up. So if you could act at all, you had a job.

**SC: One of your first films was something called GIRLS IN THE NIGHT. What was that?**

Gordon: I was in the group that was taught by Michael Chekhov, and Harvey Lembeck, who was an actor under contract to Universal, was in the group. One day he said to me, "I'm going to do a movie in New York called GIRLS IN THE NIGHT, and there's a great part in it for a guy. Why don't you see about it?" This was '51 or '52. So I tested for it and I got it. I went to New York on location for 10 days, and met a lot of nice people. One guy I met was named Red Kullers, who lived above a restaurant called Vesuvio's, my favorite Italian restaurant, on 48th Street between 6th and 7th. Red was in a play, he had a very small part in the first act. So he said, "come backstage, and we'll go out and have something to eat after I do my thing." So I went backstage, and that's where I first saw the woman I was later to marry, Nita Talbot, my first wife, who had a big part in the play. So I knew I was going to go back to New York to stay. So after I came back out here and finished the movie, I moved to New York.

**SC: I was trying to find a complete list of your TV credits, but there seems to be an incomplete record of the live TV shows you did in the 1950's.**

Gordon: If you had a list of live TV shows in front of me, right now, I'd probably check every one of them. Because you'd just work week after week after week in those days, going from one show to the next. Some of the hour-long shows, you'd have to work for a month, because they'd be in rehearsal for three weeks or something like that.

**SC: Live TV bit the dust and the whole industry shifted to L.A. When did you move back?**

Gordon: It was about 1959, everything started moving out here. Everything started to change. For instance, I remember doing ROBERT MONTGOMERY PRE-

SENTS in New York. That was an hour show, I think it was on Sunday nights. We would do two shows, because there was no lim. In other words, you had to do it live twice — at 6 p.m. L.A. time, it would be 9 p.m. in New York, and we'd do the show live for the East Coast. Then, at 9 p.m. L.A. time, which was midnight New York time, we'd do the show again live, for the West Coast. That was fun. Then Kinescopes came in, and they started kinescoping everything.



Don Gordon gets tough in FUZZ (1972)

**SC: Kinescopes were the beginning of the end for the live TV era, but they did preserve those old shows for future generations.**

Gordon: It's history. Think of the actors, and the shows, and the writing that was all lost. I know you're aware that 50 percent of the movies made before 1950 are gone, destroyed. They were burned, thrown away, deteriorated, or nobody cared to save them. You begin to think about that — what have we missed? After all, movies and TV reflect our history. They show what we wore, what our cars looked like, what our houses looked like.

**SC: But even after the live broadcast days, you worked on some of the most popular shows. TWILIGHT ZONE, OUTER LIMITS, and of course THE DEFENDERS. That was a great period for you.**

Gordon: It was all fun. Look, any actor worth his salt is forever learning his trade. Once you've stopped learning, you're finished, it's all over. To this day, I'm still learning, still trying to get it perfect. You have to, or else forget it.

**SC: Your Emmy nomination was for a two-part episode of THE DEFENDERS, which is no big deal today, but it was revolutionary back then, right?**

Gordon: I was living in L.A., but I was brought out to New York to do that one. What happened was, Stuart Rosenberg, who directed it, he and I had worked on THE UNTOUCHABLES. That's where we first met. He's a brilliant director. They didn't originally want me for THE DEFENDERS. I won't tell you who they wanted, but it wasn't me. But Stuart said, "There's only one guy to play this part, it's Don Gordon." But the network said, "No, we don't want him. Nobody knows who he is." But Stuart said, "OK, if Don doesn't do the part,

then I'm not going to direct." Three days after we started shooting, all the suits from upstairs came down to congratulate me on my performance. I said, "Oh, thanks." It was originally supposed to be a one-hour show, and we finished shooting the hour, and I came back here. Stuart stayed in New York, cutting it. Then about a month later I get a phone call from Stuart. He says, "You gotta come back out here. We can't cut THE DEFENDERS, so we're going to make it a two-part episode." It had never been done before, but they felt it was impossible to cut it. It was so good, and everybody was so good in it. So I went back to New York, and we shot the second half.

**SC: The Emmy nomination must have had an impact on your career.**

Gordon: Well, it helped. But I was working all the time. I was just one of those guys, and there are a lot of us around, the people recognize but they don't know our names. Which is all right with me, I don't care. That isn't what I started acting for, so people would know my name. I acted because I had to, it's my life. It's what I was put here to do, it's what I've done, and if somebody offered me a movie today, I'd do it.

**SC: Did you first meet Steve McQueen when you appeared on his TV show, WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE?**

Gordon: No. I lived up in Laurel Canyon, and the first time I saw McQueen, he had just started doing WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE. I had never seen it. He used to pass by my house every once in a while, in an old truck. This would be 1959 or '60, right in there. And we stared at each other, never said a word, and this went on for a few months. And then one day he said "Hi," and I said "Hi." We started talking, and one thing led to another and we became friends. And he told me about the show and said, "You wanna be on it?" And so I did one show with him.

I think Steve was the best friend I ever had. We were very close. The best friend I ever had. I miss him very much. I did a couple of pictures with him, and we always had fun. He trusted me, I trusted him, and that's all I have to say about Steve.

**SC: I've heard stories about you and McQueen riding your motorcycles around San Francisco all night during the shooting of BULLITT.**

Gordon: Steve was not a good motorcycle rider, he was a great motorcycle rider. A great dirt rider. If he hadn't been actor, he could have been a championship racecar driver or motorcycle racer. The guy was phenomenal.

Here's how I got the part in BULLITT. I got a call to go over to Warner Bros. A director wanted to see me. So I went over to see this guy, and we're talking about this movie, and he sent me a script and I read it. It was a good part. And then he said, "Well, Steve really likes you." And I'm sitting there thinking, "Steve? Who the hell is Steve?" So that night, my agent calls and says I got the part, and then it hit me, "you're talking about McQueen." I never called him Steve. We were on location in San Francisco, and I said, "hey, man, I want to thank you for getting me this part." And he got very upset. He said, "What are you talking about?" I said, "I know you got me this part." And he said, "I didn't get you any fucking part, what are you talking about?" Well, of course he was lying, of course he had said to Peter Yates, "I know this actor, I think he'd be good for the part."

But anyway, when I found out I had the part, Steve said to me, "Let's take our motorcycles up to San Francisco." Even though it was in our contracts that you can't drive a motorcycle while you're making a movie, the insurance wouldn't cover it.

**SC: What kind of bikes did you guys have?**

Gordon: I had a 650 Bonneville Triumph, which for its time was a hot bike. I don't know what the hell Steve was driving. I think he had a Triumph too. We all drove Triumphs — Paul Newman had a Triumph, Steve did, all of us did. The ones with the blue gas tank, and Triumph on the side. So, what he said was, "We'll hire a truck, an enclosed U-Haul, and we'll have some guy drive the bikes up there. We'll rent a garage and we'll hide them, and then, when we're not working, we'll go riding." So, sure enough, we were up there about a week and a half before shooting started, because we wanted to hang out with the police. And then at night we'd go to this garage and park on a little side street, get on the motorcycles and go off for a couple hours, driving up and down the hills. We did that almost every night. They never knew, and nobody ever recognized McQueen. We had a lot of fun.

**SC: Do you have any particular memories of making PAPILLON with McQueen?**

Gordon: [Director] Frank Schaffner kept me alive in New York in the fifties. He used to hire me all the time in live television. He and I had been friends for years. He's a terrific director, PATTON, PAPILLON, PLANET OF THE APES. You have to understand that when you're doing movies, you're just working, and you're having fun. Nothing, at least for me, stood up. I got up, couldn't wait to get to work, and we worked hard and played hard.

PAPILLON was shot in sequence. I'm only in the movie for, what, four minutes? If that. And I was in Jamaica for almost three months. Well, first we went to Spain and shot the scene where the prisoners are boarding the ship. Then we flew from Spain to Jamaica, and the next time you see me, I'm dead. You see me in a couple of shots on the ship, but then I escape. But they were shooting everything in sequence, so I had about a two and a half month period where I did nothing but swim. I sent for my wife, and we played, we had a lot of fun, and I was being paid.

**SC: The third movie you did with McQueen was THE TOWERING INFERNO, a big-budget, all-star action movie.**

Gordon: I had a very small part in it. It was originally a little bit bigger, but like a lot of people's parts, much of it wound up on the editing room floor. I spent a while in San Francisco, and again we had fun, but it was a hard picture for Steve. I mean, he had a lot of hard work. But we all knew each other. Paul Newman, and I knew William Holden because I had worked on a picture called FORCE OF ARMS with him, directed by Michael Curtiz.

**SC: You didn't have any scenes with O.J. Simpson, but did you meet him?**

Gordon: O.J. and I hung out together for a little while. It was OK. I'd rather not get into that whole thing.

**SC: You were in a couple of films directed by Michael Campus, including ZERO POPULATION GROWTH (a.k.a. ZPG) with Oliver Reed. Was Reed the animal everyone says he was?**

Gordon: Well, he's dead now. He was an asshole then, he's an asshole now. He drank a lot, and he was a mean drunk. I didn't like him, and he didn't like me. I remember we were in Denmark, and I was sitting at a table. I don't usually drink, but there was a bottle of beer on the table and I'd had a little bit of beer. And he [Reed] came over and got right up in my face, he was drunk. I don't know if you've ever noticed, but he's got scars on his face from being

hit with bottles. And he started in, getting on my case and everything. He's a big guy, and at that time I weighed 145 pounds. And I realized, "This guy's a bully." So I said, "Listen, we have to work on this picture, so we may as well get along and everything. But don't fuck around with me. 'Cause you see this bottle? I'll stick it in your fucking mouth and break it off." And he just looked at me. I meant what I was saying. I wasn't kidding. I was ready to pop him one right in his eyes. I didn't care. I'm not gonna take his shit. And he backed off and said, "Ah, we're gonna be great mates," something like that.

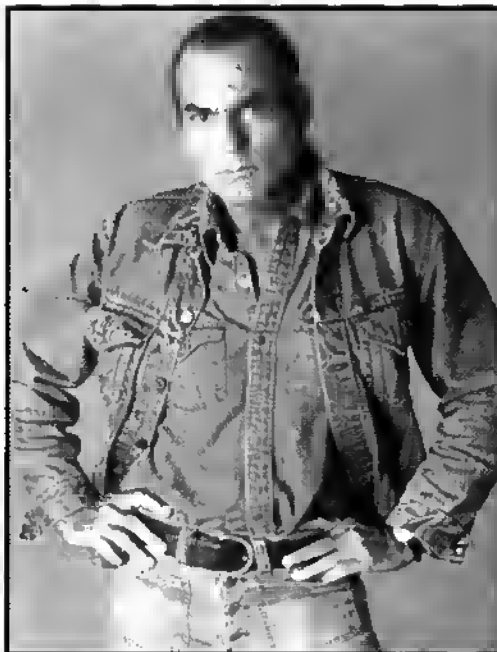
And we got along after that, but he was a bully. The only way to deal with a bully is to let him know you'll kill him. Or he'll kill you, one or the other.

**SC: Do you have any memories of working with Richard Pryor on THE MACK? The producer, Harvey Bernhard, said Pryor was written out of the movie during the shoot, because he was so hard to deal with.**

Gordon: I don't know anything about that. I got along fine with him. Richard had a lot of problems, but then again, who doesn't? I was never aware of that. I was aware of outside influences when we were working, who were threatening us.

**SC: The Black Panthers. They were pretty much threatening to shut down production, right?**

Gordon: They threatened to firebomb us. But, listen, people do what they gotta do. It didn't bother me, because in those days, I'm sure that had I been born Black, I would have been a Black Panther. But you have to go back to that time, you can't think of it in terms of today. It's like people talking about the fact that George Washington owned slaves. How many



years ago was that, 300? Everybody owned slaves if they had money, and it wasn't frowned upon. In today's society it's frowned upon, but there are countries, African countries even, where people own slaves. Everything has to be put into perspective. You go back to the days when we were making THE MACK, and there was a lot of anger out there. And I can empathize with it and understand it.

**SC: Did you meet the Ward brothers, the pimps who acted as advisors to the filmmakers?**

Gordon: I did meet the Ward brothers, I met Frank, who was killed while we were shooting.

Shot in his car, I think. Don't ask me anything about it, because I don't know anything. Listen, those guys are and were no different than the Mafia. Now, I'm Italian, and when I was a young man, 10, 11, 12 years old, I knew certain people in the Mafia. You just don't talk about it. There's nothing to talk about. So, who wants to talk about the Ward brothers? What good is it going to do? It's not going to accomplish anything.

**SC: It's an interesting back-story to the making of THE MACK, which is one of the best Blaxploitation movies, if not the best one. What do you remember about Max Julien? He's kind of an enigma.**

Gordon: Max is all right. Max is Max. My wife used to call him "hands."

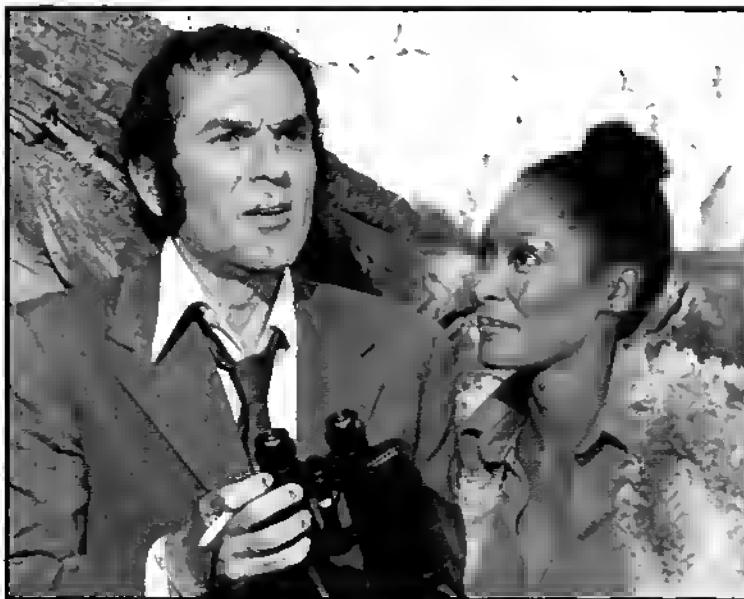
**SC: I can only guess why.**

Gordon: You know, he was OK. I liked him.

**SC: You also did a film with Jim Brown. Did he ever try to kick your ass?**

Gordon: Oh, come on! [Laughs] He could kick me through the goalposts. He's huge. But he's the nicest man in the world, always nice to me, always good to me. He's a good person, a gentleman. I can't say enough about him. I haven't seen him in years. He's a man, a real man, and I admire him in so many ways.

It's interesting how I got the part in SLAUGHTER. You know, Jim Brown's a big guy, about six-foot-four, just huge. His thigh is as big as my waist. I met with Monroe Sachsen, the producer of that movie, and Jack Starrett, the director, and I walked into the waiting room and there were four guys, all of them big guys, [auditioning] for this part. So I knew I had to do something or I wasn't going to get this part because I was too small. So a couple of these guys went in, and then I went in, and Monroe Sachsen said, "Ah, you know, listen..." And I picked up his desk and I flipped it over. And he stood up — "Who is this mariac?" And I grabbed him and I said, "You sonovabitch, I'll fucking kill you, you cocksucker! How dare you bring me in here, motherfucker?" He was petrified, petrified! My agent called that night and said, "Monroe Sachsen wants you



Don Gordon with Marlene Clark in SLAUGHTER

to do his picture, but he says that you're crazy. What did you do?" So I told him the story. I had to do something to catch his attention, to make him believe I could play alongside Jim Brown. And he believed me — he thought I really meant what I said. I scared the shit out of him, but I was acting, I was just playing, and Jack Starrett knew it. He was just laughing, because he knew what I was up to.

We had a good time making that movie. Rip Torn was a piece of work, and I loved Stella, she's a great dame. Do you remember the scene where Jim and I are fighting and we fall out of a window into the pool? They couldn't show the tight scene, because I came up to Jim's waist, he's a giant compared to me. So Jack Starrett said, "I've got an idea. Jim, when you walk into the room, don't put on the lights." If you remember that fight, it's done in the dark.

**SC: And it's filmed through a fisheye lens, which is quite weird.**

Gordon: But you never really see anything. And then two guys come flying out the window. "Don't put on the lights. We'll do the fight scene, and then we'll have two stuntmen come right through the window." And that's how we got away with doing a fight scene between Jim and me. Otherwise it would have been laughable.

**SC: You've worked with so many icons. What were your experiences like shooting THE LAST MOVIE with Dennis Hopper in Peru? Was it as chaotic and drug-addled as legend has it?**

Gordon: I knew Dennis slightly beforehand, but we got to be very good friends on the picture. But let me say something to you right now. Whatever I know, or knew, about any picture — whether or not there were drugs or anything — I'm not going to talk about that. I'm not



Don Gordon with Bill Mummy and Steve McQueen in PAPILLON

a gossip, that's number one. And number two, unless I see something with my own eyes, unless I'm there, how can I talk about it? I can't talk about rumors. I'm not putting you down for asking, I'm just being square with you. I'm just letting you know: That's not what I'm about.

**SC: Hopper has an unusual approach to both acting and directing. Did anything rub off on you?**

Gordon: Dennis has an incredible eye. Some of his still photographs were in the Museum of Modern Art; his eye for photography, and for cinema, is unbelievable. He's a wonderful director, and he's a good actor. Personally, I wish Dennis had done more directing and

less acting. Like John Cassavetes, who was a friend of mine. I'd rather see John shoot a movie than be in the movie. But the problem, for me, with John Cassavetes was he couldn't cut, he didn't know when to cut out anything. Dennis has that same kind of thing. But he's a very talented man, a rare commodity.

**SC: You made another movie with him several years later, OUT OF THE BLUE. He was originally going to just act in the film but took over as director. What's the story behind that?**

Gordon: One Friday night my wife Denise and I — Dr. Denise Gordon, she's a psychologist — we came home and the phone rang. It was 11:00 p.m., and it was Dennis. "Hey man! I'm in Vancouver making a movie! I need you, I want you to do a part." He was doing a part in the movie, and another guy was directing. They got rid of the director, and wanted Dennis to direct. So Dennis took another [smaller] part, and he needed somebody to play the part he was originally supposed to play. So Denise and I got in the car and drove to Vancouver the next morning.

**SC: The list of your co-stars goes on and on...you even worked with Burt Reynolds, Raquel Welch and Yul Brynner in FUZZ.**

Gordon: I loved Yul Brynner. [Imitating him] "Don, don't go home. Stay and have dinner with me, my friend." I said "Yul, I can't, I gotta go home." And he says, "Why are you going home, Don? Don't you love me?" And I say, "Yeah, I love you, Yul, but I have a wife at home who I love more." And so he would laugh and laugh. And I've known Burt for a long time, he's a good guy.

**SC: In the '60s, you co-wrote and starred in a low-budget independent / CONTINUED on PAGE 47**

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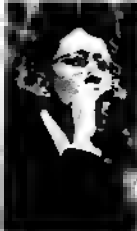
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# FROM DePALMA TO DALLAS: An Interview with Actor JARED MARTIN

By DEAN GALANIS

If you watched network television with any kind of regularity in the '70s and '80s, you've seen Jared Martin, probably more than a few times. He played the lead in the 1977 series *FANTASTIC JOURNEY* (a childhood favorite of mine), co-starring Roddy McDowall and director-to-be Carl Franklin. He had a major role on *DALLAS* (as Dusty) during the entire "Who Shot J.R.?" period, as well as the cult hit *WAR OF THE WORLDS* in the late-eighties/early-nineties. He's also had guest shots on a slew of hit shows, ranging from *COLUMBO* to *NIGHT GALLERY*.

Jared's career has run the gamut, from roles in early films by Brian DePalma (with whom he has remained close friends for forty years), major studio films (*WESTWORLD*) and Broadway (*TORCH SONG TRILOGY*).

With his rugged looks and commanding presence, Jared won many leading-man roles, but he never really enjoyed playing the Hollywood game. Early in his career, he often battled with producers and directors for more creative input, and because of his perceived "attitude," never reached the top of the L.A. heap. Luckily for us, this led to his being cast in a variety of cult and exploitation films, including *QUIET COOL* with James Remar, *THE SEA SERPENT* (Ray Milland's last film), the Pia Zadora atrocity *THE LONELY LADY* and Lucio Fulci's *THE NEW GLADIATORS*. (Jared seemed most amused that when we met, I recognized him not from *DALLAS* or *WAR OF THE WORLDS*, but from this highly enjoyable, patently Italian sci-fi/action film).

In conversation, Jared is extremely witty and open, with a refreshingly lucid view of show business and his own career. He's taken his years of rich experiences — the good, the bad and the painful — and put them to use in a most positive way: as creative director of the Big Picture Alliance, an organization that teaches film making skills to inner-city youth.

By all appearances, Jared is happy and grounded, and seems to have left acting behind. While it's certainly gratifying to see he's reached a state of fulfillment, it sure would be a treat to see him onscreen again, whether it be delivering a Shakespeare soliloquy or battling a puppet sea dragon.

**SC: Let's start with your Columbia University years. How did you meet Brian DePalma?**

Jared Martin: We met because he was looking for a roommate and he picked me.

**SC: Did you have classes together?**

Martin: No. I really didn't know who he was. He stopped me in the street one day, pretty much out of the blue, in the spring of — I think it was 1960. He lapped me on the shoulder and said, "I'm Brian DePalma. I'm looking for a roommate, and you're it." I don't think it was as cool and dried as that, but he picked me. He had seen me in a production of *EDWARD II*, and he had already made a film at Columbia at that time: *ICARUS*.

We got an apartment on West 111th St. with an actor named Don Briscoe, who was briefly in *DARK SHADOWS*, and is now dead. And that was the start of a long, still flourishing, adventurous and challenging friendship. Brian influenced me in a lot of ways. And also he had a motor scooter — so I got on the back of his influence and his motor scooter, and we'd go up to

Sarah Lawrence, which was infinitely more attractive and appealing to two randy young tads. We fell under the influence of Willford Leach, who is probably fairly forgotten now, but he was really a very strong director in the '70s.

**SC: Were you in anything Willford Leach directed?**

Martin: I was in *ONDINE*, which was a big watershed for all of us early Columbia/Sarah Lawrence-ites.



Jared Martin in TV's *WAR OF THE WORLDS*

Brian was in *ONDINE*, Bill Finley (the lead in Brian's *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE*) played the Old Man in *ONDINE*, Kristina Callahan (who went on to become an actress, and was Brian's girlfriend) played Ondine, I was Hans, the Knight, and Willford directed. It was very successful. We did it at Sarah Lawrence and Columbia and it was kind of a crucible for us artistically — we all kind of grew up on that production. Then it was kind of time to graduate. I pulled away from Willford's influence; Brian didn't. He continued on at Sarah Lawrence and got an MFA there, and Willford was his mentor for a couple of years after that. Then we were both in the wilds. I was in New York becoming a stage actor, and Brian was doing films and unconsciously preparing to head for California.

**SC: You were in some shorts of his, weren't you?**

Martin: I'm trying to remember. I starred in *THE STORY OF AN IBM CARD* — it was myself, and an actress named Jane Rappaport. I was very briefly in *THE WEDDING PARTY*.

**SC: I saw that your credit, according to imdb.com, is "Wedding Guest".**

Martin: Yeah, I was a wedding guest, and I was miffed because he cast an actor named Charlie Pfluger over

me. Charlie was even more charming and handsome than I was in those days. (laughs) Charlie is also dead. (laughs) Let it be known that I'm not laughing here; it's just kind of grim humor, forty years later, to be talking about people who were so intensely alive at that time — and now are not. But if you crank up *THE WEDDING PARTY*, you'll see Charlie and Bob DeNiro and...gosh, I think Jill was in it, Jill Clayburgh. Cynthia Munroe, who was very briefly my girlfriend, was the producer — she's dead. Willford Leach was also the director — he's dead. And Brian — thank God he's alive! (laughs)

**SC: I read in Susan Dworkin's book, 'Double DePalma', that THE WEDDING PARTY is based on your marriage.**

Martin: It probably is, yeah. Brian was all my marriage, which was a notorious affair. I got kind of inebriated the night before.

**SC: A bachelor party?**

Martin: Yeah, it was kind of a bachelor party. I was too young to get married, but was too stupid to know it. It was in the country and all sorts of people from different families were there, people we hadn't seen in years and years, and everything that could go wrong went wrong. I probably should stop talking about my life at this point, and refer you back to *THE WEDDING PARTY*, but I was the Charlie Pfluger character. And Brian and Bill Finley were my best men.

**SC: What's Bill Finley been doing lately?**

Martin: Bill kind of dropped out of acting and has become a writer and filmmaker who lives in New York. I see him every two or three years...He's doing fine. He got married and has a son. He's a wonderful artist, very inventive, but I don't think he wanted to go to Hollywood and get involved in that rat race. Like so many of us, the so-called mainstream commercial world was probably not to his liking.

**SC: I really liked him in SISTERS...**

Martin: Oh, he was wonderful in *SISTERS*. He's really one of the true terrific, creative spirits — the kind of guy you could lift the lid of age off of him and that flame is still burning steadily, steady and blue. We were very close, all three of us. I've never had friendships that close since then. It's the kind of time when you really share things, challenge each other, get into all sorts of scrapes: breaking the law, driving too fast, drinking too much, chasing too many women, being chased by too many women. When all things were possible. When I was going to write the best novel ever written, Brian was going to make the best film ever made, et cetera. And then somehow you start getting hitched into success, and you get pulled into the machinery of the entertainment world, and everything that once seemed wildly possible, now seems barely practical. Practical considerations have to be made, and dreams — which are by nature insubstantial — were the first to go...

**SC: Did you ever write a novel?**

Martin: Yes, I've written two unpublished novels. I've also written several short stories and poems. Some of my poems have won poetry contests. But... I think the next ten years are going to be the best ten years I've ever had. Maybe I should settle down and just write.

Kind of scary, though. What happens if nobody reads it? (laughs)

**SC: To backtrack a bit, was Columbia U. the first time you were serious about acting?**

Martin: No, I was hooked when I was 13. I was a shy kid — fat and unwieldy. My mother tried everything: piano lessons, art classes, so forth and so on. She finally wound up (gelling me involved) with this acting group that was in Rockland County, where my family was living at the time. And the first thing I ever did was James Thurber's *THE THIRTEEN CLOCKS*. And I loved it. I really came alive. By the time I got to Columbia, I think I made an attempt to get back into the real world by not acting. But it was hopeless. I joined the football team — became the quarterback for the freshman team. I got the stuffing kicked out of me for a couple of plays, and I started thinking about getting back into the tights! (laughs) And did. And when I graduated from Columbia, the same thing happened. I worked for the *N.Y. Times* for a couple of years, but I hated it.

**SC: What did you do there?**

Martin: I was a copy boy and later a reviewer in the Book Review department.

**SC: Were you acting on the side at all?**

Martin: No, I was cold turkey. And then Brian showed up again. He was making *MURDER A LA MOD*, and wanted me to be in it. And I started — well, I thought of it as cutting class, but it was actually not showing up for work. I wasn't very serious about that part of my life, so after a while they "expelled" me, or tired me. (laughs) That was it: I was an actor.

**SC: Have you seen *MURDER A LA MOD* recently?**

Martin: Yeah, I saw it with Brian about 3 years ago, we sat down and watched it.

**SC: Any memories of working on it?**

Martin: I'm walking into Memory Lane here, a lot of people in it I can't remember. Andrea Akers was there — she was an actress for quite a few years. Bill was in it — Bill Finley, myself. Ken Burrows...gosh, it's hard to see it as a film and not a closet lull of memories. Brian was still working out a lot of his ideas in the film. It was very expressionistic, very strange. The plot didn't exactly follow from A to B to C. But already, you could see his cybernetic, multi-prismatic "eye" at work. Great eye for the geography of a picture frame, and locations that lent themselves to film architecture. We shot down on Wall Street on Saturday and Sunday when it was totally vacant, we shot out in the graveyard in Queens with Manhattan in the background, which everybody else has used since then. He edited all the stuff himself. Brian ran the table of classic film influences — taking the best of each. He was most influenced by Eisenstein and later Hitchcock. More Eisenstein at that time. Hitchcock is a little less frenzied. As he matured, Hitchcock's influence moved to the front. Brian's early films were pulsing with energy, literally pulsing with energy. Hard to watch them; had you kind of on the edge of your seat. They attacked you.

**SC: You had a bit part in *WESTWORLD*. Any stories there?**

Martin: No, I never got to see Yul Brynner or

Richard Benjamin. I guess it was a big credit at the time. I was either cocky or stupid — or both. I always had an idea that I should be playing larger parts than I was, which other people interpreted as an attitude. It was only later that I realized that it was a pretty significant credit for a guy who went out to Hollywood without anything — literally, without anything — and was working raking brush. That was a good credit.

**SC: Any memories of Michael Crichton?**

Martin: He was very tall. (laughs)

**SC: How did you come to be cast in *SECOND COMING OF SUZANNE*?**

Martin: Jennifer Schull. I've lost touch with her, but she was a wonderful lady. Smart, beautiful. She was a casting agent who tried to help me out by giving me roles. A lot of people saw me as a comer, but I was a little difficult to deal with. I did have an attitude. I was a New York stage actor, and Hollywood — I thought there was something wrong with it. I felt everybody should be more serious, that they should rehearse through their lunch hours. I was always doing that on the set of shows like *YOUNG DOCTORS* and *DESERT VOYAGERS* and *CHAIN GANG GUYS* or whatever (laughs), and I'd organize the actors to rehearse during lunch hour, which was totally unthinkable and I think was actually against union rules. And it just made it more difficult for A.D.'s and directors to function...

After a spurt of working for two years, I suddenly wasn't working for a while, because word had spread. Anyway, I was the back bartender at the Troubadour, which at the time was a very happening club. James Taylor was discovered there, Elton John, Steve Martin. That was the club where John Lennon had a Koolhaas lapel to his forehead and got bounced. I got a phone call which said, "You've got the part in this movie you went up for a couple of weeks ago, and it starts shoot-

ing in San Francisco next Tuesday." I said, "Thank you very much," put the phone down, took my apron off, said "I quit," and walked out the door. (laughs) That was the last time I worked a so-called day job. Jennifer Schull was the associate producer on that film, and now that I think about it, the cast was quite extraordinary. There was Rick Dreyfuss, Paul Sand (who was a good actor at that time), Gene Barry. Sondra Locke. Nobody in Hollywood knew what to do with her, she was... odd. Possessed of an absolutely strange quality. An albino beauty. Ice princess. Can't remember who else was in it —



Jared Martin as Varian in TV's *FANTASTIC JOURNEY*

Martin: Penelope Spheeris, yes! I remember Penelope Spheeris because she was very strong. Sometimes I wonder what the hell she was thinking about during *SUZANNE*. Michael Barry, who was Gene's son, wrote the script, which was convoluted and personal, and also directed. It was kind of an adventure for all of us. We went up to live in San Francisco, and I remember they put us up at the Mark Hopkins, so there was some money in the production. And...I don't know quite how to say this, but those were the days when people were... taking a lot of drugs. (laughs) There's no other way to say it. The film is visually beautiful, and indeed won a couple of awards for its cinematography, but I don't think it won any awards for its coherence.

**SC: Was the end result close to the script?**

Martin: No, the script was kind of a springboard into situations that were then worked out on set. Michael had a very strong visual idea,

or plan, for the movie, and anybody who looks at the movie — or can find it to look at it — will see that. There's a scene where my character crucifies Sondra Locke on a cross on top of Mt. Temple Plus, and there are other very strong visual set pieces. And the story kind of connected them. It was like paintings being linked together by gossamer threads of dialogue and story. There was a lot of improvisation. The movie was very much a child of its time. Leonard Cohen's music was all the way through it. At the end of it, we'd worked so hard I wound up in the hospital.

**SC: From exhaustion?**

Martin: I guess so. My red blood count was down to about 40% of what it should have been. I collapsed on the set — the only time I've ever done that — and was shipped home.

**SC: Any memories of Richard Dreyfuss or Sondra Locke?**

Martin: That was just before the 1972 Munich Olympics, and Rick Dreyfuss was going to them. He had just finished *AMERICAN GRAFFITI*, where he was the star, and in *SUZANNE*, he was not the star, he was my character's henchman. He's a very, very smart guy. Huge IQ. I think he saw the movie for what it was, was having a good time, and hanging out, and he could not wait to get to Munich to see the Olympics. I think he had front row seats.

**SC: What did you do between *SUZANNE* and *FANTASTIC JOURNEY*?**

Martin: I did a bunch of TV shows; I can't remember most of them. Basically three-day parts. I was graduating from three-day villains to seven-day sympathetic young leads. I did a *COLUMBO* with Peter Falk, I did an episode of *TOMA*, with Tony Musante, who was a good actor. I think the next breakthrough for me was December of '74, when I went to Griffith Park and did a somewhat active audition — a physical audition — against Kurt Russell.

**SC: Really?**

Martin: For a part in a movie called *MEN OF THE DRAGON*, done by David Wolper, who was going to take his documentary expertise and location savvy

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**SC: Penelope Spheeris.**

and go to Hong Kong and make a kung fu film. It came down to me and Kurt. They took the two of us to the park and had us run to a tree and back. That was the audition. I guess they took the tall guy over the short guy. But God knows he went on to have a great career.



**Martin and NEW GLADIATORS co-star Eleanor Gold**

**SC: He was still kind of the Disney guy then, wasn't he?**

Martin: Yeah, he was the Disney guy — very young. That cragginess and malurty and gravity didn't develop until later. But we went to Hong Kong for 6 weeks and I had a great time. Stayed by myself most of the time, I explored, went up to the border. The Cultural Revolution was going on on the other side of the border, and I looked at the Chinese soldiers with their Tommy guns, and told myself someday I'd get over there. It sparked my interest in China, which has continued ever since. I've been back several times. Years later I was fortunate enough to marry the Chinese classical dancer Yu Wei. So running out to that tree turned into a rather long and unexpected life journey — you never know what you're getting into.

I had a wonderful time, and it probably was the worst thing that ever happened to me as a serious actor, because I never turned down a location shoot after that. Never. You could get me for a dime if you were going to, you know, the Galapagos Islands. I'd be sitting next to you on the plane before you could turn around. (laughs)

**SC: Was MEN OF THE DRAGON ever aired?**

Martin: As a movie. It was a cult favorite. People came up to me in the street years afterwards. I was a kung fu hero. Of course, they had an extra — a six foot, three inch guy named (I don't know why I remember this) Don Eiber. I guess because there's not too many six foot, three inch Chinese. I think it was on the second day that Don chipped a bone in his spine and was unceremoniously shipped back to the States. They couldn't find an extra for me, and I wound up basically doing all my own stunts. And it was a real tough shoot, because they shot all the action in the first two weeks, and all the talking scenes later. I got hit a couple of times, I got knocked out once; I really didn't know what I was doing...I became friends with the kung fu master, named Pa San, and he and the Chinese fighters kind of helped me through it. Because they liked me and I liked them — they knew I was interested in China. So, as a result, the stuff was stitched together, and I looked like the greatest kung fu fighter! It's embarrassing, because years later, even twenty years later, people would come up to me and strike kung fu poses. (laughs) I came back to the States in early 1975, and hit a period of doing absolutely nothing.

**SC: How'd you support yourself?**

Martin: Unemployment. I dropped my agent, which was really stupid: this was my attitude surfacing again. I went with an agent who was later found to have been selling drugs in a Sunset Strip parking lot. So, I left my good, secure agent who had been slowly building my career and went with an idiot. I suffered, as indeed I should have, from a sinkhole of complete inactivity. And I was kind of desperate. I went up to an audition to play the Man of the Future. Of course, the "Man of the Future" couldn't put together a clean pair of socks or a pair of pants without a hole in them at this point. (laughs) I was feeling pretty down on myself, but, by God, I got the part. That show was done by Bruce Lansbury and Leonard Katzman, who would go on to be the executive producer of DALLAS. FANTASTIC JOURNEY ran for all of nine episodes, but those nine episodes put my life together and allowed me to regain some self-respect.



**Jared and Fred Williamson in Lucio Fulci's THE NEW GLADIATORS [I Guerrieri Dell'Anno 2072]**

**SC: Were you upset when the show was canceled?**

Martin: I was upset. I was confused. I was scared. You always feel like somebody died. Suddenly you don't see all those people again, this marvelous family, this illusion of growth, support, friendship. It's all torn apart in a phone call. I did meet Carl Franklin, who later developed into a wonderful director, and Roddy McDowall — he was a lnp. I mean that in a good way: Roddy was very much an exemplar of show business, kind of a working exhibit under glass. He stayed by himself, but he was good to be around. He taught you how to behave yourself on a set, how to show up knowing the lines, how to edge your way into a shot, and edge your way out of a shot. But, we were opposite THE WALTONS on one channel, and WELCOME BACK, KOTTER on the other. And we were crushed into vapor.

**SC: Did Carl Franklin seem to have aspirations to direct at that point?**

Martin: Like most actors, he had aspirations of surviving. I just remember him as a genuinely nice guy. A really solid...what they call a mensch. We tried to keep in touch, but it's really hard. He drifted off, and I drifted off, and later he went into directing. And I think he...you get tired of being in these shows. You get tired of pouring your emotions and lifeblood into relationships you know will be truncated, and turned to hash by a ratings chart. Also, you get used up. You get devalued. If you've been in a couple of canceled series, your number doesn't come up that easily again. I had a good run. I was a regular on HOW THE WEST WAS WON,

which was actually one of my favorite roles — the gun-fighter, Frank Grayson — and I did something for Jack Lord called M STATION HAWAII. And then I kind of lucked into DALLAS. About this time I was getting tired of this television stuff. I wanted to go back to my roots, and I joined Lee Strasberg's Master Class at the Actors' Studio. There had been a writer's strike or an actors' strike, so I followed Lee back to NYC. Previous to the strike, I had done a three episode stint on DALLAS, at the end of which my character's plane went down and was incinerated, so I never really thought about it. I was studying with Lee in the winter in NYC. The rats of hunger and poverty were beginning to gnaw at my insides again, and I got a call from my agent saying, "You know what? Your character is really popular. They think you killed JR." I had no idea what they were talking about. A little while later, she sent me a copy of a headline in the Daily Mail or Daily Telegraph, and my face was on the cover. "Dusty Killed J.R." She said, "I think you're going to be hearing from these people." I said, "How can I be hearing from these people? I'm dead." She said, "Don't worry. They'll figure out a way." And she was a prophet, because I did hear from them again. They signed me for 13 weeks, they brought me back to Hollywood. I was only on the show for about 30 episodes, but it was stretched out for a very long period of time. There's an old show business saying: I'm best known for my worst work.

**SC: Were you cast in THE NEW GLADIATORS because of DALLAS? Had Lucio seen it?**

Martin: That's a good question. Oh! I know how I got cast in GLADIATORS. I had a Roman agent, and I went over there as part of a disaster called THE LONELY LADY, with Pia Zadora. Which, again, I look because...well, read the above paragraph about "if it's on location, I'll take it". I took it, and worked once a week for about ten weeks. I lived in Rome and my son Christian, who is now producing DATELINE for NBC, but who was 15 at the time, came over and lived with me. We had a terrific time, and every once in a while, I'd have to show up at the set and pay my dues and act in the film. (laughs)

**SC: How was Pia Zadora to work with?**

Martin: She was fine. Very professional. She was in a difficult situation. Every time she'd raise a pinky or put a toothbrush in her mouth, several Israeli bodyguards would snap to. She had a very protective, very rich husband who was bankrolling the film. What can I say? I think it was voted the worst film of the year, probably the worst film of the decade. It's really a joke. Fortunately, I got cut out of a lot of it. Fortunately.

I have nothing more to say, except, "I'm guilty, your Honor. I did it". (laughs) Anyway, to get back to Mr. Fulci. I was in Rome, and the Italians, they don't waste time with auditions. They just say, "I want that person, I want this person", and throw them together. I was handed the part. Since I was in Rome, they didn't have to pay for me to come over. I still was coasting on the DALLAS fame, and I would eventually return to the show as well as — going in a whole different direction — star on Broadway in TORCH SONG TRILOGY and THE CRUCIBLE.

**SC: Did you enjoy working on NEW GLADIATORS?**

Martin: Yeah, I must say I did. Fulci was a taskmaster; he worked you real hard. The days were hard, the set ups were hard. It was science fiction, which means there were smoke machines and special effects, which you always have to wait around for. The make-up was extra fierce, and was running in the heat. The Italian film studios are not air-conditioned — or sound-proofed, by the way. It was...difficult. Difficult condi-



tions. There were a lot of stunts. Anybody who's seen NEW GLADIATORS will see it's kind of a brutal film, as are a lot of Fulci's films.

**SC: When you jump through the window to save your wife, it looks like real glass.**

Martin: Oh, that was the easiest thing to do. That was sugar glass. There is a moment, as you've left your feet and you're catapulting towards that glass, when you wonder if it's really going to break!

**SC: Aside from the window crash, did you do your own stunts?**

Martin: Everything excepting the motorcycles. What were my own stunts? There was a torture scene where I was having the stuffing kicked out of me — but that's easy. Most of Fulci's films — and I haven't seen them all — there aren't a lot of fights; it's all kind of torture. And it's very easy to do a torture stunt. You just sit there, and somebody does something to you. (laughs)

**SC: You've mentioned in the past that Fulci is a very minimal director when it comes to actors. He'd just say "Faster, slower. More, less." Do you like that style of directing?**

Martin: At that stage in my career, I kind of appreciated it. I knew what I wanted to do, and I knew what he wanted me to do, and I was with other actors who knew what they wanted to do. And basically Fulci was directing the stunts and the special effects; the things which make Fulci famous. That was his real relationship, and we all knew that, and we all got out of his way. He was going for those moments, and we were chess pieces he was moving around the board.

**SC: Was there a language barrier problem?**

Martin: It was a barrier, but it was a barrier that wasn't a problem, because Fulci didn't really want to spend a lot of time talking about the Stanislavsky Method, or the finer aspects of diction and elocution. (laughs) Basically, he was happy on his side of the fence, and I was fairly content on mine.

**SC: What did you think of Fred Williamson?**

Martin: I liked Fred. He gave you everything you needed; he was straight up with you. He was a big guy; he was only a few years past being the comeback in the Super Bowl for the Kansas City Chiefs. I know he could've taken me apart with a toothpick if he'd wanted to. I got on well with him. He had a good sense of humor. It was a bit like being on a pirate ship with those guys — we were all kind of outcasts. It was a strange movie. For Fred and I, we'd never really worked with Fulci before, and we weren't quite sure who he was and where this movie was going. We were sure it'd never be seen by anyone, and now it turns out to be a big cult film (laughs) Go figure.

**SC: You had said that on AENIGMA, which you did four years later, Fulci was a very different man.**

Martin: I knew he'd been sick. I think he'd had a liver problem. He was a lot more subdued. He had to watch his intake of everything — food, alcohol and especially stress. The size of the production was definitely reduced. It wasn't even an Italian film, as far as I could figure. It was basically a Yugoslavian film. It had the feel of a real small, boutique horror film. Not too many people on the set, not many special effects. The acting level was considerably down from the gladiator film. He was actually using amateurs in many scenes. I just got the feeling of a sadness about the man. This time the language barrier worked against him. It was a small group of people in Sarajevo, which was a small city, and in another circumstance it would have been a good time to get closer, but we didn't and we kind of went our own ways. And indeed we never worked together again.

**SC: How did it feel to have your voice dubbed by another actor? Did it bother you at all?**

Martin: It bothered me, yeah. The actor who did my voice wasn't good. I can't quite understand why, me being an English-speaking actor, they didn't get me to dub it...It's hard for me to look at AENIGMA. As a matter of fact, I've never looked at it all the way through.

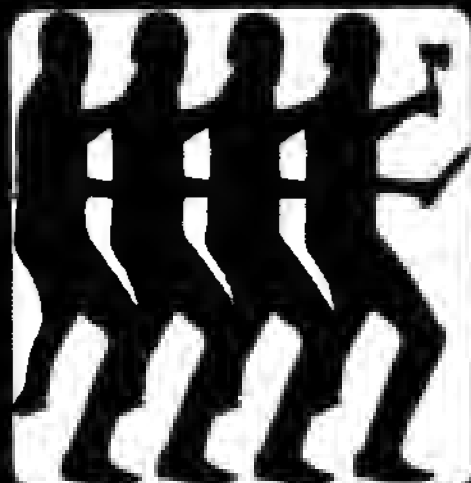
**SC: THE SEA SERPENT. You mentioned to me before you didn't really remember much about the director, Amando de Ossorio, director of the BLIND DEAD films.**

Martin: I remember him as a white-haired, silent, craggy figure who struck poses and nodded his head a lot. The director I responded to was the go-between, whose name I've forgotten, who was a genial young Spaniard. He would tell me what the director wanted, and would tell me what to do. I call it remote control or "pilot light acting": you just basically go with what's inside, and as long as they don't scream, "No!", you know you're doing alright. Don't remember too much about the director.

It wasn't a very good film. It's very hard to look at a gaffer's tape mark and shriek and yell, and show horror and alarm, and then realize years later what you're looking at is basically a thumb with a dragon's mouth painted on it. (laughs) And how stupid does it get...So, I don't know too much to say about the SEA SERPENT except I remember the moment Ray Milland left show business. We were standing on wet rocks, and we're all slipping. And it was night, and it was raining. We were looking at this sea serpent, which wasn't there, of course. And it was getting into the wee hours. And at one point, I was supposed to turn around and say something to Ray, who was playing the professor. And he wasn't there! He had just walked off the set, gone back to the hotel, had a drink and gone to bed! (laughs) And that was the last I ever saw of him — or anybody saw of him, for that matter.

**SC: Any comments on WAR OF THE WORLDS?**

Martin: I liked WAR OF THE WORLDS. I actually liked my work on it. I learned more from my two years on that show than I think I'd learned in twenty years of show business before that. The story editor had had a heart attack, and they didn't replace him, so Adrian Paul and I, in self-defense, would take these scripts which were coming up from Hollywood, some of which were pretty awful, and story edit them. I learned from those sessions how / CONTINUED ON PAGE 47



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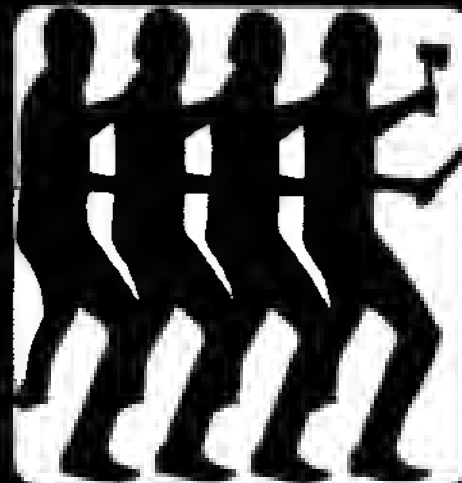
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# FILM FLOT SAM

## READERS' REVIEWS

DRIES VERMEULEN; Belgium.

**BELPHEGOR: LE FANTÔME DU LOUVRE** [Belphegor, Phantom of the Louvre] (2001). A 3000 year old mummy wreaking havoc in the famous titular museum was the subject of a popular '60s French TV-series for pre-teens starring legendary songstress Juliette Gréco. Now a young helmer by the name of Jean-Paul Salomé, who previously made the social comedy *RESTONS GROUPE* [Let's Keep the Group Together] and an obvious fan of the show, has turned this pivotal childhood experience into an expensive (the elaborate CGI FX alone must've eaten up a considerable chunk of the budget) and undeniably good-looking multiplex blockbuster. Erstwhile centerpiece Gréco even has a literal walk-on bit in an atmospheric cemetery scene where she briefly makes eye contact with her replacement Sophie Marceau, a talented thespian best known to US audiences for her purely decorative turn in Mel Gibson's silly *BRAVEHEART*. Though aimed at family audiences, this fairly old-fashioned adventure yarn will please nostalgic moms and dads rather than their offspring who've become accustomed to far more gruesome sights than the very mild horrors on display here. For the uninitiated, this intentionally naive mix of scares and chuckles will be a disconcerting experience. For example, in spite of its 1935 Egypt prologue, complete with a tomb desecration whose perpetrators wind up swiftly dispatched, the movie draws less inspiration from old Universal or Hammer mummy chillers than from a long line of possession pics ranging from the modest *WITCHBOARD* to the landmark *EXORCIST*, with Marceau as beleaguered heroine Lisa, unwilling vessel to the mummy's vengeful spirit, doing a PG version of Linda Blair's finest hour for the film's grand finale. More importantly for the more pervy members of this magazine's readership (hey, it takes one to know one), she also bares her shapely butt and (n)ight boob on separate occasions, just so you won't forget that this is a French flick. Diminutive Frédéric Diefenthal, hot shit on the Continent following his performance as the clumsy policeman hero of the wildly popular *TAXI* movies, registers strongly as her frequently beaten up romantic foil. Oldtimer Michel Serrault (swishy Albin from *LA CAGE AUX FOLLES*) gets all the best lines as a retired cop turned security expert plus a halfway decent larical romance with bumbling Egyptologist Julie Christie, the latter handling her French dialogue in disarming Laurel & Hardy fashion. Once viewers can get over the fact that this movie's not intended to scare the living daylights out of them (though the image of the diabolical Belphegor in full ceremonial burial dress gliding through the Louvre's corridors — a la *BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA* — has a certain eerie Jean Rollin type poetry about it), they can enjoy this handsomely mounted horror comedy for its pleasing performances, amiably ludicrous set pieces and stunningly shot Paris settings with all the tourist traps present and accounted for. A genuinely haunting Bruno Coulais score, employing authentic ancient Egyptian instruments, is the icing on the cake.

**MYSTIQUE** (1979). For better or worse, one of the more ambitious porn epics ever made, by none other than our hallowed Empress of Exploitation Roberta Findlay to boot! This is one of several movies she completed under the guise of "Robert Norman", others including *ANYONE BUT MY HUSBAND* and *A WOMAN'S TORMENT*. The average raincoater might've figured out he was in deep shit once the strains of Gustav Mahler's less than cheery "Songs for Dead Children" boomed out of the grindhouse sound system. The onslaught on viewer expectations and sensibilities hardly stops there. In a weird attempt to snare the highbrow crowd (as if they'd ever admit to frequenting the scuzzy-floored porno palaces of yore) the main characters are called Alma and Cosima after Wagner opera heroines. The first, exceptionally well played by Georgina Spelvin, is a successful photographer suffering from a mysterious ailment and forced to take a rest at her Fire Island beach property, a familiar location from many a Findlay fuck flick. This retreat from active life does not place as much of a burden on Alma as one might imagine as she has

always felt herself to be something of an outsider and a loner. She compensates for her emotional and sexual reticence by fantasizing about former models (cull fave Helen Madigan among them) and the elderly physician (Jake Teague) who first informed her of her health problems in a creepy scene strangely reminiscent of the Patricia Arquette/Bill Pullman bedroom boff in *LOST HIGHWAY*. At a deserted stretch of beach bordering her abode, Alma meets and falls in lust with the scarlet-cloaked Cosima (an oddly cast Samantha Fox), inviting the younger woman to stay, a decision she'll soon regret. In no time Cosima's taking advantage of her newfound lover's inability to deny her anything, bringing friends over for wild parties, lording Alma to participate in a demented attempt to make the poor woman atone for a lifetime of emotional barrenness in the face of death. If, as Findlay strongly suggests, Cosima is but a figment of Alma's levered imagination at life's end, then that would imply that the latter is severely punishing herself for passing up on past romantic possibilities. This particular reading makes for a downbeat viewing experience with most of the film's sexual encounters shot and performed in an alienating and deliberately anti-erotic fashion. Subsequently, genre fans have never really figured out what to do with this decidedly different, undeniably brave but probably also some-

what misjudged effort. That said, it would take a blowtorch to the skull to eliminate some of its arresting imagery from my memory.

**MULHER OBJETO** [Woman as Sex Object] (1981). Ah, the voracious nymphomaniac, that staple ingredient of erotic fiction; the sex film genre would be lost without her. In this surprisingly stylish slice of Brazilian softcore, former actor Silvio de Abreu (who'd go on to achieve considerable fame as a scribe of soapy TV drama series) trots out a test case named Regina. Quite literally embodied by the impossibly gorgeous Helena Ramos, she finds herself continuously plagued by vivid sex fantasies giving way to real life trysts with just about everyone she meets and subsequently "meets." Naturally, taking into account the movie's cod-scientific pretenses, those sinful urges can be traced back to a traumatic childhood experience. Since salsa skinflicks rarely shy away from rampant teen nudity, this involves a bout of underage groping (including the brief shot of an erect member) at the back of a church during mass with the branding of our nubile heroine as a precocious slut upon discovery, all set to Bernard Herrmann's instantly recognizable *PSYCHO* theme! Having pinpointed the source of her wayward wantonness, through hypnosis at the hands of a sanctimonious and smitten shrink, she's miraculously cured and free to love her sappy savior. Don'tcha just love a happy ending? Corny conclusion aside, this charming carnal collection has the good

sense to devote the bulk of its hefty 105 minute running time to the sight of ravishing Ramos in various stages of undress, lovingly photographed by Antonio Melande, who shot Jose Miquel Mann's ultra-groovy *O EXORCISMO NEGRO* (a.k.a. *BLACK EXORCISM OF COFFIN JOE*) in 1974. Small world, huh?

**VINCENT CONSERVA**; Garden City, NY.

**THE MISFIT BRIGADE** [a.k.a. *Wheels of Terror*] (1987). This picture is a real oddity. Not because of the film itself, but because of its subject matter and the year it was produced. A World War II combat film, told from a Nazi's point of view, was definitely not your usual direct-to-video action lodger during the late-'80s. Come to think of it, it never was...The title says it all. Our heroes are convicted criminals assigned to the 27th Panzers division, and these guys are malcontents of the highest order. We get plenty of shell-shocked clichés, but they're handled well, and with elements taken from *THE DIRTY DOZEN*, *KELLY'S HEROES* and *CROSS OF IRON*, you end up with a loud and rude little 'B' flick. The man directing this Aryan mayhem is none other than Gordon Hessler (*KISS MEETS THE PHANTOM OF THE PARK*), and there are also plenty of familiar faces. *WILLARD*'s Bruce Davison wears a yellow top hat complete with leather, Keith Szarabajka (TV's *THE EQUAL*



IZER) is a grunt who just wants to get back to his family. Jay O'Saunders plays a giant with a brain the size of a peanut, and best of all, David Patrick Kelly (THE WARRIORS) is a mad aristocrat. D.W. Moffett is their alcoholic (but sympathetic) Captain. Our boys spend their time beating each other up, watching pornographic propaganda films and fornicating at the local brothel. However, when a sneering Colonel (David Carradine!) enters the picture, the fun and games are over. The colonel has an offer the brigade can't refuse. If they can make it through the Eastern Front and blow up a Russian fuel train they will be rewarded with their freedom, and from this point on the film becomes a suicide mission. Even though time is of the essence, the Misfits get an opportunity to frolic at a "love commune" made up of deserters. Yes, that means lots of naked girls in a pond! We even get the late great Oliver Reed as a twitchy General! And by the way, you can forget subtitles. In fact, no one even sports a hint of a German accent! There's plenty of action, good performances, some belly laughs, and an anti-war message. What more could an old war dog want? Maybe a shock ending? Well, you get that too. [Ed. note: The movie is based on a book by WWII-novelist Sven Hassel, and from all accounts, is a pathetic adaptation.]

**SNOWBEAST (1977).** When JAWS hit the big screen in 1975 and became the all-time box-office champ, a new terror sub-genre was born — the "beastie" movie. American and European film companies began cranking out flicks with every critter you could imagine. As long as they had big teeth. There was ORCA (a killer whale), TENTACLES (a giant octopus), GRIZZLY (a gargantuan bear), THE PACK (wild dogs), and the list goes on. Of course, it wouldn't take long before the small screen got in on the carnage...Scripted by Joseph Stefano (PSYCHO), SNOWBEAST combines tourist/skier attacks with the Bigfoot myth. Our tale is very similar to JAWS, in that a "winter carnival" is coming up and that means money to the townsfolk, so no one seems willing to admit that the local ski lodge's guests are being eaten. Robert Logan (the WILDERNESS FAMILY films) plays Tony, the resort manager, and he only answers to one person, Grandma (Sylvie Sydney). She's tough, but she used to be the carnival queen, so you can just imagine her opinion when Tony suggests something might be very wrong up on the mountain. By this point we've spotted a large, hairy white paw print through a few ski parkas, so we know our trostly friend is getting brazen. Tony is shocked when an old friend shows up at the lodge, looking for a job. Gar (big bad Bo Svenson) used to be an Olympic champ, but he's now down on his luck and a little gun shy about hitting the slopes again. To make matters worse for Tony, Gar's wife (Yvette Mimieux) is an old flame, who does smart things like ski by herself when it's getting dark out. After our "snowbeast" crashes the carnival rehearsal and some bloody bodies are found, our trio teams up with the sheriff (Clint Walker) to track down the monster. Well directed by Herb Wallerstein and quite creepy at times; in fact, this doesn't quite feel like a TV-movie at all. However if you're hoping to get a nice look at our predator you'll be disappointed, since there's just a brief glimpse. These films are usually ignored or suffered by critics, but there are plenty of people who grew up with them and have a soft spot for 'em. Not only that, but some really do deliver the goods, like SNOWBEAST. Note: Scripter Joe Stefano has stated that one problem in making the movie was the cast (another problem was time). Apparently the original actor to play Gar was fired after filming began when the filmmakers discovered that he couldn't ski a lick! Who this actor was remains a mystery as elusive as the "snowbeast" himself.

**ANNA PUCHALSKI; Jersey City, NJ.**

**JIGOKU (Hell) (1960).** This interesting bit of Japanese fantasy cinema is a precursor to the psychedelic approach to filmmaking so prevalent in the late-'60s. The basic story is a Buddhist approach to Dante's Inferno. Our hero, a young student named Shiroi (that means 'white' in Japanese) experiences a number of disturbing events, including being an unwilling passenger in a hit-and-run vehicle, witnessing the death of his girlfriend, and generally being surrounded by dubious characters. At last he is called home to care for his ailing mother. During his stay at his father's "senior citizen home", Shiroi is tracked down by the mother and girlfriend of the hit-and-run victim, the parents of his deceased fiancée, and a tormenting peer who seems bent on making Shiroi's life even more miserable. I'm not giving anything away by telling you that EVERYBODY in this film dies. After all, the title is HELL, so you know where this is headed. In a violent climax that leaves a pile of corpses, our hero finds himself on the shore of the Japanese river Styx. Here he's informed of his life-long sins and the torments of Hell are described in detail. Like Dante's Pilgrim, Shiroi travels through the underworld, meeting people he knew in life and seeing their punishments. However, unlike the Inferno, Shiroi must experience the

tortures too, and attempt to save his soul and have his chance at reincarnation (there's no Heaven in Buddhism, guys). While the story can be overwrought and melodramatic, remember the time period. This is an exceptional piece of work from director Nakagawa Nobuo, whose prevailing theme — more than anything else — is style! From the experimental camerawork, to the artistic lighting and composition, and even the wardrobe, this is true cinema Fashion! Check out that white silk "tiger" jacket that the Drunken Yakuza sports (years before Chuck Norris) and the red dress his girlfriend strips off in the club scene, plus all of those sexually-symbolic pink umbrellas. No question, you don't have to be an Asaphile to get sucked in by this one.

**TOM FITZGERALD; Los Angeles, CA.**

**SPEEDING UP TIME (1971).** Released about the same time as SWEET SWEETBACK, this earnest blaxploiter hails from that brief period when black directors were able to make more personal films before the genre became dominated by action flick conventions. Among cool kinetic sculptures, frustrated aspiring poet Marcus encounters fellow black bard Ojenke rapping about freedom and cosmic truths. Inspired by these expressions, our protagonist hits the gritty streets of L.A. looking for leads on who killed his mother. Following the grapevine, he weaves through the everyday world of working class black America. Barbershops, shoeshine stands, construction sites. His lover helps him keep his cool and gives the flick a chance to heat things up by exhibiting some ebony skin. Eventually he tracks down the corpulent mobster who's to blame and proceeds to get some payback. To celebrate, Marcus and his lady head to a smoky night club for some stone cold funkiness from a J.B.'s-style combo. What it lacks in cheap thrills it makes up for in an authentic street sensibility, including verité footage from a Black Panther rally.

**SUICIDE CULT [a.k.a. Astrologer] (1977).** From the bottom of the OMEN rip-offs barrel comes this, the red-headed stepchild of all the Anti-Christ corporate conspiracy/world domination flicks. US intelligence operative Alexi Abernal has refined astrology into a science creating the vast covert agency Interzod. This Pentagon-funded psychic friends network can almost exactly predict anyone's destiny or "Zodiacal Potential." Shadowy figures want to use it in their search for the new messiah and its nemesis. March 31st 9:36AM NYC...Alexi's pregnant wife (former Playboy Playmate and thoroughly wretched thespian Monica Tidwell) visits a gypsy fortuneteller who tells her that her child has a charmed fate. April 3rd 5:15PM India...according to Interzod calculations, homicidal Hindu cult leader Kajerste might be Lucifer's spawn. April 5rd 9:21PM Washington, DC...Alexi learns of the Virgin Mary's pure destiny of infinite goodness and that only one other person has the same "Z.P." All these events don't quite add up in this clumsy, curious mess. Director Jim Gluckhaus (THE EXTERMINATOR) has bitten off way more than he could chew with a production that wants to be a big-budget, international occult thriller but has the funding of a porno. Maybe that's why India looks suspiciously like Central Park.

**CHRIS BARRY; Naperville, IL.**

**SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT III — BETTER WATCH OUT! (1989).** The first film in this series, SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT (1984), came out with a shit storm of controversy — but Santa slinging an ax over his shoulder instead of a bag of goodies was also a kick-ass marketing coup. The film raked in enough dough to generate a whole series of slashin' Santa flicks, garnering an astounding four sequels — even the SCREAM franchise can't boast that achievement. Oddly, SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT III was directed by Monte Hellman who pretty much defined American existential cinema in the late '60s and early '70s with the acid westerns RIDE IN THE WHIRLWIND and THE SHOOTING filmed back to back in 1965 and TWO-LANE BLACKTOP in 1971. So with his name attached to SNDN III, you'd think the flick would transcend its roots and get an automatic stamp of approval as art. The plot revolves around a blind woman named Laura (Samantha Scully) who is psychically connected to the scar-faced schizo Ricky from SNDN II, who's currently in a coma. Dr. Newberry (Richard Beymer, slumming for a paycheck between WEST SIDE STORY and TWIN PEAKS) hard wires Laura's brain to Ricky's gray matter, which is visible under a clear skullcap. Inside the lunatic's head (think THE CELL without the F/X), Laura is no longer blind but sees Ricky's past punctuated by visions of his family getting popped by some guy dressed up as Santa and packing a .45. Laura's mind absorbs these Ricky fleshbacks and, after falling into a series of narcoleptic trances, she wakes up screaming. On Christmas Eve, Laura and her brother, along with his model girlfriend, go to visit their grandmother for the holidays. Ricky wakes up from his coma and, through ESP, traces Laura to Granny's house and proceeds to ruin everybody's Christmas whereby the

## An unknown terror stalks a ski resort!



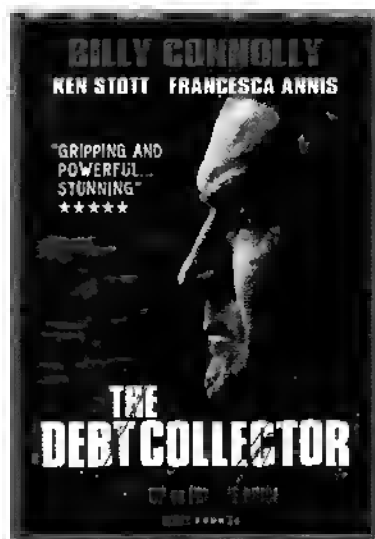
### "SNOW BEAST"

Starring  
Bo Svenson  
Yvette Mimieux  
Sylvia Sydney  
An NBC  
World Premier  
9PM



movie turns into your run of the mill slasher. Hellman utilizes some pretty effective tracking shots and immerses faces in shadowy noir close-ups with a nice air of creepiness. He also sets chunks of the movie inside a car driven by a detective Lt. Connelly (Dorian Grayish Robert Culp) with a handheld camera implying the caged-in auto-intimacy found in **BLACKTOP**. He even holds the lens on people a little longer than expected, giving **SNDN III** a sort of transcendental impression. But maybe I'm just looking for that stuff because it's *Hellman, for God's sake!*

**BLOOD SABBATH (1972).** By its title, you'd almost think this is another spaghetti slasher by Mario Bava — like **BLOOD AND BLACK LACE** or **BLACK SUNDAY**. But **BLOOD SABBATH** is as far away from giallo as they come and actually looks like it influenced Mark (AMERICAN MOVIE) Borchardt's film, **COVEN**. Over the years, however, the movie has earned dubious bragging rights — it jump-started Anthony Geary's acting career. If you were like me and spent your college days in the early '80s loading bongos and watching the soaps instead of attending class, Anthony Geary is somewhat of a hero. In case you don't know, Geary has played Luke Spencer on TV's **GENERAL HOSPITAL** since 1978. Who knows if he got the soap gig from his work in this flick, but at least it was a starring role — it not a resume stuffer. We're introduced to David (Geary): a peace and love Vietnam Vet, wandering aimlessly around a forest preserve carrying a rucksack and an acoustic guitar. His reefer addled grin is wiped off his face when a topless chick in a roving hippie van pours a can of Schlitz over his head, dousing his spacey happy-happy joy-joy. The next morning, a half-dozen or so naked forest nymphs wake David, he freaks, runs away, trips, and twists his ankle. In pain, he hallucinates Yyalah, a big-wigged woman swimming in a nearby lake. Needless to say, he falls for this sprite-o'-the-woods — they even do a gauze filtered, slow motion semi-nude run through the forest. But Yyalah can't love him because he's got a soul. Meanwhile, Alotta (Dyanne 'ILSA' Thorne), Queen of the Woods, spies this love-fest and starts to cream for David. Alotta culls a deal with David, taking his soul so Yyalah will fall in love with him. But there's a catch. If Yyalah leaves him, Alotta will take possession of David. Somewhere along the line, David drinks the blood of a virgin, acquires quite a taste for it, but that's something Yyalah just can't dig. As he struggles with losing his soul and fighting to keep Yyalah, David flashbacks to his bloody tour of Vietnam where he peppered a bunch of gook kids with his AK-47. It's movies like this that give Nam Vets short shrift in the mental department, portraying returnees as bloodlusting baby killers and spaced out drug addicts. Problem is, there's no anti-Vietnam stand evident — it's just a plot point to give David some 'fucked-up-from-the-war' sympathy. After betraying the screeching Alotta, things come full circle as the hippie creeps in the van from the beginning of the movie run down David. In death, however, he finds Yyalah and they swim away together finding true, soulless happiness.



gy was 'the policy', hurting deathwish-inflicted debtors through their family members. Connolly, talkshow smooth but still credibly vicious, and Stott, quixotic and cruel but impossible to dismiss, are both terrific, and their scenes together are powerful, especially when Stott takes to reminding Billy's new friends what he was like, by stabbing a sculpture as Connolly once did an old woman or bringing the mother of a man he murdered to his stepdaughter's wedding along with a vanload of other ex-victims. A sub-plot about a scally kid (Iain Robertson) who idolizes the old Connolly keeps tipping the film up, as if it didn't trust the characters to be strong enough without extra plot complications — and the last reel goes all psycho as, after Robertson has done over Crosbie to see off Stott for Connolly, both leads snap against the backdrop of the Edinburgh Taffoo and Stott rapes Annis (whose punk son Robertson has killed, in jealousy over Connolly's paternal interest in the kid) while Billy kicks Robertson to death.

**EL CASTILLO DE LOS MONSTRUOS (1957).** Reference books tend to scramble the ingredients of this 50's Mexican comedy. It is not a remake of **ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN**, though it does cop a few ideas and characters from the American film, and — despite its impressive line-up of monsters

(unmatched until **THE MONSTER SQUAD**) — it spends an awful lot of time with comedy shenanigans before it gets to the eponymous castle. El Clavillazo (Antonio Espino) is a knockabout comic whose schtick consists of a very strange hat and an overlarge zoot suit-ish jacket, plus whiskey routines like miming a passionate serenade for his sweetheart and being forced to keep miming when the radio segues to a female torch-singer. Clavillazo, who might be an undertaker, has a relationship with seamstress Beatriz (Evangeline Elizondo), and pals around with a group of halfwit stooges who have one mannerism apiece. A typical bit of business has El Clavillazo, who uses his stage name for his character, visiting an asylum and encountering another sane visitor, whereupon the two 'normals' warily assume the other to be mad and attempt a soothing duel, interrupted by the arrival of a real jittery, homicidal maniac (whose mad/crétin act isn't that far removed from the comedians' clowning). Meanwhile, out at the castle that was introduced before the credits with some atmos touches (clawed hands holding the reins), a mad scientist ('Dr. Spulnik') and his scarred, hunchbacked minion are making monsters. The doctor, who is posing as a kindly blind man in town, kidnaps Beatriz (another burst of atmosphere, with eyes staring out from under a slouch hat) and uses hypnosis to convince her that she is his love, Galatea. The hero blunders out to the castle, confronts the Doc and the monsters, runs around a lot being stalked and almost strangled, and rescues the girl. German Robles, star of a few contemporary serious horrors, does an act akin to Lugosi in **A&CMF** and Lee in **TEMPI DURI PER I VAMPIRI**, skulking with cape and fangs and sending himself up without much actual wit. All the other monsters just lurk about, making Clavillazo run away, and are quickly out of the picture: a Gill Man patterned on the Creature From the Black Lagoon is devolved into a big dead fish, a Wolf Man is throttled by another beast-man type creature from behind cell bars, a tall thin butler in the Karloff/Frankenstein Monster image melts away to cogs and clock-parts, and the Vampire vanishes at dawn. Dr. Spulnik is shot in the back by the dying hunchback after the usual rant ("Yes I'm mad, if it's mad to want perfection!") and Clavillazo and sweetie are rescued from a trapped cell by the gang, who keep throwing the wrong switches (lowering a spiked roof, squirting gas or water) before getting them out. Director Julian Soler frames one or two things that look good in stills but mostly stands back and lets the comic jump up and down in a desperate plea for laughs that don't come, while the action is staged in a primitive Mascot serial/Jerry Warren manner. Rubbish, but rare.

**GERARD ALEXANDER; Australia.**

**THE LAST MATCH [L'Ultima Partita] (1990).** Director Fabrizio De Angelis usually bestows upon us works which, with the right combination of chemicals in one's head, could be called 'entertaining'. I refer mainly to his **KILLER CROCODILE** flicks and his script for **ZOMBIE HOLOCAUST**. Sadly, with **THE LAST MATCH**, he provides us with a enough *lelelelele* type thrills to give anyone jet-lag. The basic story details Cliff Gaylor's (Oliver Tobias) troubles in getting his young daughter Susan (Melissa Palmisano) out of a South American jail where she is being detained for carrying narcotics. Henry Silva, as Yasheen, runs the prison with the ugliest detainees of any WIP in memory. (Thankfully, there are no nude scenes, or any of the expected prison shenanigans such as torture either.) Cliff decides to call on his football buddies to launch a raid on this impenetrable prison fortress. Ernest Borgnine is Keith, the coach, not that you wouldn't realize that since he spouts every football cliché for dialogue. Charles Napier plays the US consul in this South American nation, but he probably wishes he was on the stuff that Susan is accused of carrying rather than sitting behind his oak desk. Martin Balsam is the lawyer that wants to help Cliff as he much as possible, if the price is right. Dare I mention that the heavily armed (but football uniform wearing) assault team's battles occur in almost total darkness, depriving even the least demanding of us the joy of a simple squib explosion? This laughable team even manages to bring two army helicopters to the fight, as well as several trucks which certainly couldn't have flown in. Borgnine calling the tactics required to the players via walkie-talkies built into their helmets should be cause for at least a cheap laugh or two, but nothing could be duller than the truth. This film is one to avoid at all costs. (Yes, even if someone offers to lend you a copy, just say no).

**THE TOWERS (2001).** Marco (Matt Reeder) is a new security guard at the plush ultra-modern apartment block known as 'The Towers.' Jorn (Gareth Piliin) is the night shift guard that shows Marco his job. Security cameras are situated in every corridor of the building and in every living room as well. Guards merely sit in the control room and make sure nothing unusual happens on the screens before them. One night, as Jorn drops a couple more No-Doz tablets down his throat and chases them with Coca Cola, he notices that Emily's room has been trashed and goes



## SCRAPING THE BOTTOM OF THE FILM FLOTSAM BARREL

by 42nd Street Pete

Every once in a while a few films slip through the cracks and are forgotten. Any sleaze fan who patronized the grindhouses that lined 42nd Street from the late '60s to the late '80s would have noticed that certain films were forever consigned to the bottom half of a double (or sometimes triple) bill. These films were run so often as a second or third feature that you sort of got "desensitized" because they were on the marquee so much. These bottom feeders of the film chain have been much maligned, and rightfully so. Most people don't remember them because (A) most of them really sucked, or (B) like myself, after a night of partying, you were almost comatose when they came on. Most of these flicks, with a few rare exceptions, were bottom of the barrel EuroTrash. Horrible dubbing, incoherent plots and bad acting were their claim to fame.

A few stood out or sunk lower, depending on your point of view, than the rest. **THE DIRTY SEVEN** [a/k/a *La Belva Dalle Calda Pelle*] (1982) was one of them. Retitled to cash in on the popular "Dirty Dozen" formula of film making, the grainy print rolls on to the screen. The opening credits get to the title and a black bar spreads across the screen, obscuring whatever the original title was and replacing it with **THE DIRTY SEVEN**. Whoever retitled this movie couldn't count. It's more like the dirty half dozen.

A bunch of mercenaries, after completing a mission, are double crossed and attacked by those who hired them. The survivors of this attack, a group of people you couldn't care less about, get into a fire light that reduces their numbers to live people that you really don't care about. A historical sleaze note: One of the mercenaries that gets wasted in the first reel is a black actor who appeared in a bunch of Italian splatter movies including **ZOMBIE** and **DOCTOR BUTCHER M.D.**

The remaining sadistic pricks march inland, and the group includes a wounded Captain, a cowardly German who's very close to his Captain (if you get my drift), a sadistic monster named Falk (with a horrible Brooklyn accent), with Victor and Marcel rounding out this pack of animals. They encounter a prospector named Boney, who they force to guide them through no man's land. The boys and Boney come to a farm and convince the farmer that all they want is food and shelter for the night. Boney borrows the farmer's mule to take the Captain to a nearby doctor, as the rest of the group proceed to get drunk. The farmer forbids the men to go up into a loft, so they kill him and find that the guy has hidden his young granddaughter up there. They proceed to brutally gang rape her in a scene that's real hard to watch, and their dubbed-in profanity would make the patrons of a biker bar blush. Boney returns to find the girl sliced up like sushi after the boys were finished with her. The German didn't participate because he was too busy agonizing over his lost Captain and puking his guts out all the same time.

Falk has gone completely around the bend, which doesn't exactly endear himself to the filthy live. Victor, scanning the area with binoculars, spies a woman (Laura Gemser) by a stream refreshing herself. His vision drops below her waist, reveling a hiked up skirt and a beaver's eye view. He brazenly approaches her, and unfazed, she informs him that she too is on the run and that her name is Sheila. Vic may be a horn dog, but he's no fool. Keeping his gun trained on her, Vic tells her that he hasn't had a woman in quite awhile (yeah, about fifteen minutes ago, to be exact). Sheila seduces him, then in mid-stroke (so to speak) lures him into a deadly game of hide and seek, which drives Victor into a maniacal frenzy. Pulling a knife as he corners her on a ledge, he snarls "I'll luck you or kill you." Sheila opens her arms to embrace him, but deftly side-steps and sends him plunging into the rubble below, where Victor is impaled on his own knife. The others find Vic and blame his death on Falk, who was missing for a while. "I was taking a crap," snarls Falk. "Look over there and you'll see it still steaming." No one takes Falk up on his offer. (Thanks for the visual, dude.)

The now Sloppy Six keep marching and find Sheila. She tells them the same story, that she is on the run. They all want her except Boney, who is suspicious of her. Sheila picks up on this real quick and starts to turn the horny bastards against each other. Falk kills Marcel after convincing him that he isn't interested in Sheila, while Boney confronts Sheila and finds that she is not a prostitute on the run, but the dead girl's sister out for revenge! Falk is disarmed and tied up to keep him out of trouble, and Sheila, for some strange reason, disappears. The German is left to guard Falk while Boney looks for Sheila. Falk, at the German's request, verbally re-enacts the whole rape in graphic detail as the German listens in rapt attention. Falk wrestles the gun away from the horny Kraut and shoots him. Boney and Sheila return to find the German mortally wounded, with Sheila cheerfully putting a bullet through his head, but it is Boney who finally wastes a begging-for-mercy Falk. Boney throws down and leaves Sheila, as (mercifully) the credits roll.

**THE CUTTHROATS NINE** (1971; available on dvd at [www.lfww.com](http://www.lfww.com)) is another nasty little flick. Tacked on to the bottom half of a horror double bill, it's a EuroWestern masquerading as a horror film. The original print ads had a gooney looking face on them to further illustrate this point. I don't recall the top feature that lured me into the Liberty Theater on the Deuce. In retrospect, the print of MD 20-20 not only put me in the proper frame of mind, but caused me to nod out during the main feature. When I came to, the end credits for the first movie were rolling. Unfortunately for me, the after effects of the cheap hooch left me unable to move, so I was stuck watching this lurid little stinker until the bitter end.

This is a gnm gem with all the things we sleaze fans appreciate about imported trash cinema. Real bad dubbing that is almost [Continued on opposite page]

to investigate. He picks up torn S&M photos strewn in the corridor as he approaches the apartment. Emily (Alyssa McClelland) is okay. Her boyfriend Julian (played by co-director Sean Fitzpatrick) has vanished however. Emily's young stepister Mary (Amy Fisher) visits Jorn during the night, and he starts seeing a dark stranger (played by FARScape's David Wheeler) in every passageway. The next morning, Emily is dead. Shot in flat, cold colors, and performed with subdued intensity, this film is the first long work by co-directors Philip Harding and Sean Fitzpatrick. While the first quarter hour could do with some trimming, the whole is a genuinely effective chiller.

**ARREBATO** [Fit] (1979). This Spanish art/sleaze obscurity by Ivan Zulueta begins with a crackly voice-over as Super 8 film is spliced together. Pedro (Will More) sends the reel to schlock film director Jose (Eusebio Poncela) whom he had met at a drug party in the countryside months ago. Jose is sick of making films that have no resonance, envying the freedom wacked out Pedro has. Jose is also sick of his girlfriend Ana (Cecilia Roth) and her smack addiction, which has a way of including him with every opportunity. Pedro's theory that life is only worth anything if it is caught on film intrigues Jose. Pedro's short films detailed his travels, using pixilation to maximize the number of images per reel. However, as Jose receives the latest installment of Pedro's diary in progress, he realizes something far more macabre is derailing his friend. Shot in a lurid Eastmancolor stock, the constant injecting, snorting and sleepiness of the cast's drug addictions soon turn into a panorama of doom. The concept of film as a literal vampire also erodes one's sense of comfort. It's by no means a perfect picture, but the refusal by Zulueta to take the easy road makes for an enthralling, if bleak, 110 minutes.

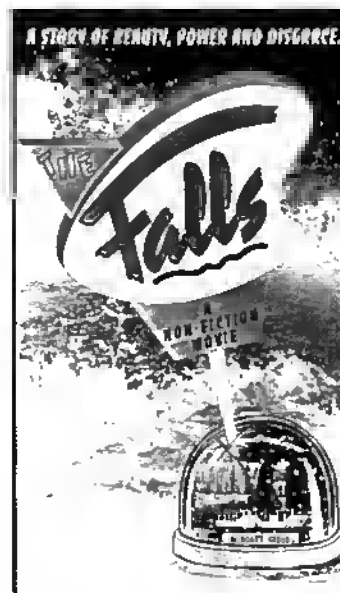
**ADAM GROVES; Manhattan Beach, CA.**

**AWAY WITH WORDS** (1999). An astounding, annoying, disorienting, exhilarating, eye-popping, awe-inspiring flick from the Australian born, Hong Kong based cinematographer Christopher Doyle. This was his directorial debut, and it proves once and for all that he is without a doubt one of the most accomplished and inventive image-makers on the planet. It's set in and around a seedy nightclub in present-day Hong Kong where three quirky characters converge: a gay Australian immigrant with a penchant for sleeping in 7-11's, a shiftless hipster haunted by memories of his childhood, and the waitress who gets to know and love both of them. In form it closely resembles Doyle's collaborations with Wong Kar Wai, particularly **CHUNGKING EXPRESS** and **FALLEN ANGELS** (leading me to believe that Doyle had a far greater hand in crafting those films than he's given credit for), but is several times more abstract and stylistically extreme. It rarely ever makes sense, and nor is it meant to — this is pure, unadulterated cinematic anarchy from start to finish (it's no surprise that the end credits cite surrealism and automatic writing as influences). It's best to simply sit back

and let Doyle's amazing kaleidoscopic imagery wash over you — if you're willing to surrender yourself to this film's unique rhythms, I guarantee you won't be sorry.

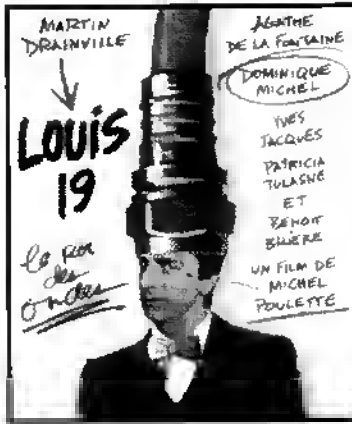
**THE FALLS** (1991). NOT the Greenaway film, but a haunting and eccentric "non-fiction movie" about Niagara Falls and its slow depletion. Stunningly shot and boasting an excellent Phillip Glass-like score, it shows air-headed tourists wandering around the falls and gawking, unaware that a shiload of toxic waste is dumped into the area every day. Featuring interviews with residents of the area talking about the numerous birth defects that have occurred in recent years, and an elderly rescue worker who dispassionately recounts the many people he's seen commit suicide over the falls. Hypnotic stuff for the most part, but director Kevin McMahon mercilessly pads a film that would have worked just fine at 30 minutes to a bloated 89. Thus we have much off-topic subject matter (not

content with indicting humankind for its depletion of the environment, McMahon also takes some pointless swipes at celebrity worship and violence in the media) and repetitive footage — proof that you can have too much of a good thing.



**LOUIS THE 19th, KING OF THE AIRWAVES (1994).** A terrific French-Canadian comedy whose US release was aborted by ED TV, the expensive Hollywood remake That flick certainly wasn't earth shattering, and neither is this one, but it is compact, funny and smart (none of which can be said for ED TV). It also holds up remarkably well, considering that real life has long since caught up with its once-radical premise of a couch potato who wins a contest to have his life broadcast 24 hours a day — needless to say, this entails much more than anyone bargained for, and Louis soon decides it's time to escape, which he accomplishes first by running away (leading to a "find Louis" campaign) and then by staging a makeshift porno flick with his g.f. (needless to add, this part didn't make it into ED TV). A last moving and unlaggingly inventive flick; it doesn't always work, but it's never boring (something that definitely can't be said for its rambling remake!).

**THE PROM (1992).** A shockingly good AFI student film — with its insightful script and slick, professional look, it's easy to see how director Steven Shainberg convinced established actors like Jennifer Jason Leigh and J.T. Walsh to sign on. It's the story of a young man (Andras Jones)



the victim's luneral. Turns out the woman was the dead singer's voice, with the latter lip-synching Nelligan's songs which were actually pre-recorded in a secret room

who suffers from dark, ugly blotches that tend to appear without warning all over his body. Obsessed with real-life freaks, he finds the only person he can relate to is a stripper (J.J. Leigh in a worthy addition to her repertoire of tortured lowlives) whom he hires to be his date at an imaginary prom. Shainberg resolutely avoids sentimentality, imparting a mused anguish reminiscent of LOVE IS A DOG FROM HELL. Having won a number of awards at various film festivals, this could have played theatrically (it's that good), but the 15-minute running time — too long for a short film but not nearly long enough for a feature — assured it a quick, if undeserved, death.

**THE WHITE ROOM (1990).** Canadian writer-director Patricia Rozema's all but forgotten follow-up to her well-received debut I'VE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING. This is a typical sophomore effort in most respects, meaning it's a sprawling, self-indulgent mess. But it's quite an intriguing mess, with Maurice Godin as a meek fellow who after witnessing the murder of a popular singer finds himself falling in love with a mysterious woman, played by Kate Nelligan, whom he meets at

monotone. Canned music that has nothing to do with what's happening on screen. In fact, the music at times gets so loud that it drowns out the dialogue and detracts from the action. We have all heard this music before. Bad horror flicks from the 1950s to the early-70s have used it. A prime example is William Grele's Florida-lensed DEATH CURSE OF TARTU. And let's not forget all the sadism and gore. Lots of it. And the camera dwells on every atrocity in graphic detail.

The film opens as a wagon, with three soldiers escorting it, leaves a mining camp. In the wagon are seven prisoners who have been chained to each other. Also in the wagon are Sgt. Brown and his daughter. Brown is played by the only "name" actor in the film, Robert Hundar (Hunter on some video boxes), a hawk-faced man who appeared in a lot of EuroWesterns, most notably SABATA. Brown's wife was brutally murdered by one of the chained seven, as we're treated to flashbacks showing her being disemboweled. The wagon is stopped by slimy bandits looking to rob some gold. When none is found, the bandits become understandably upset. One shows his displeasure by caving in one soldier's head with a rifle butt, amidst a lot of spurring blood and gray matter. Another has his throat cut from ear to ear.

The wagon and its lucky passengers are sent stampeding until they crash. This scene makes you really feel bad for the horses. Brown and his daughter jump to safety, and the prisoners are less than thrilled by this turn of events. One has a broken leg and the ever-so-helpful Brown orders the others to take turns carrying him. It seems to be snowing all the time. The scenery is bleak, desolate and cold. So was I at this point. The prisoners amuse themselves by singing cute songs about how they're going to kill Sgt. Brown.

After awhile the prisoners are getting pissed off about having to carry the guy with the broken leg, so after Brown licks them in for the night, they draw lots to see who gets to kill the guy. Morning comes, only to find there is one less for the early morning brunch. "You can still carry him," snarls Brown. After one day of lolling the stiff, the boys set the corpse on fire and Brown isn't happy about the unauthorized cookout. Finally, one of the boys uses a rock to break their chains and discovers that they're made of gold! A big argument breaks out. If you have never heard an argument in monotone you don't know what you're missing. One prisoner refuses to go on, telling Brown "You'll have to shoot me." No problem! Brown blows his eye right out of his head and chops his arm off from the chain. The boys now know that killing Brown will not only free them, but will also make them rich in the process. The group finds an abandoned house to escape the elements and Brown is soon jumped, brutally beaten and forced to watch as his daughter is violently raped. Brown is left hanging from the rafters as the boys set the place on fire, and is burnt alive in a scene not for the squeamish.

As the prisoners march to freedom, with Brown's daughter in tow, the guy who instigated the rape is hung with his own chains by the only prisoner who was against the whole rape thing. The remaining bunch is perturbed, but not that much when they figure the pie can now be cut four ways instead of five. One prisoner, an alcoholic degenerate, decides to take off on his own. In a booze-induced hallucination, he imagines Sgt. Brown coming back to life and chasing him, and the guy is eventually killed in a rather tame shoot-out with a bunch of bandits. The surviving three arrive at a trading post run by a man named Caldwell, who has a history with one of the boys. As they go out back to chat, the sympathetic prisoner is killed and it is revealed that he is the one who murdered Brown's wife, while Caldwell is hung up with a hook through his back and disemboweled. At that moment a wind who had been passed out two rows behind me woke up and muttered "Oh, look at all dem gals hangin' out." As the two remaining prisoners plan their next move, Brown's daughter finds and lights a stick of dynamite, blowing the whole place up and ending her (and our) torment.

There used to be a grindhouse on 42nd Street, the name I can't recall, that would show three kung fu flicks around the clock. Sometimes at the bottom of this triple bill a flick called THE FIGHTING FIST OF SHANGHAI JOE [a.k.a. The Dragon Strikes Back] (1972) would appear. I can imagine the collective groan that came from the Brothers expecting another chopsoy period piece. It's a kung fu spaghetti western, that "stars" Klaus Kinski (for maybe ten minutes) and Chen Lee (no relation to Bruce or Chris) as Shanghai Joe, though he is never called that in this 94-minute ordeal. Usually he's called a chink or a dirty yellow bastard. One character remarks, "We just got rid of the Indians, now we got a bunch of chinks."

Joe has come to the old EuroWest to become a cowboy. After a few trials and tribulations, he's hired by a bunch of gunmen to herd cattle. The "cattle" are Mexican peons used for slave labor, and when the border patrol arrives, the gunmen start shooting the peons in an orgy of exploding blood squibs. Joe objects to this outrage and kung-fu's the nasty gunmen. The

culprit behind the slavers is a wealthy land baron who is fond of shooting peons as they are strung up by their wrists for the entertainment of his cohorts. See what you're forced to resort to when you don't have cable? The original DJANGO back in '65 did this a lot better. Joe is righteously pissed off and beats the hell out of everyone. The land baron decides Joe is a threat to everything he holds dear (slave labor, bad acting, etc.), so he puts a \$5,000 bounty on "that dirty chink" and hires four killers to take Joe out.

The first, Pedro the Cannibal (Robert Hundar) tries his luck as he mutters "I wonder how China men taste." He's either living up to his nickname or he's really lonely out there on the prairie. Joe kills him with a pot of boiling rice. Killer #2 (Gordon Mitchell) is a bit more creative. He digs a pit full of stakes and lures Joe into it. The crafty Joe is not impaled however, but tricks his adversary and flips him into the death trap. Killer #3 is a gambler who lures Joe into an ambush, but the ambushers wind up killing each other in the confusing shoot out. The gambler makes a deal with Joe, lolling him into a false sense of security, but when he tries to pull a hidden gun, Joe deftly plucks his eyes out. (QUEEN BOXER did this stunt first, for you kung fu purists out there.) Killer #4 is Jack the Scalper (Klaus Kinski, looking more weird and demented than usual), who shoots Joe in both legs and knocks him out. When he comes to he finds Jack trying to scalp a girl who Joe befriended earlier. Jack keeps eight knives in his jacket, so Joe chops him on his sides, driving all of the knives into his chest. With all the killers dead, the land baron spares no expense and brings in a martial arts master. A lively kung fu battle climaxes the film with swordplay, a lot of jumping around, and the traditional (I guess) palm thrust through the heart.

Joe's girlfriend wants him to stay, but Joe has found his calling to seek out injustice, right all wrongs, and all that sentimental horseshit we've come to cherish. SHANGHAI JOE has its share of violence, bloodshed, over-the-top sadism, plus it's always fun watching Kinski collect a paycheck.

I hope all of you readers enjoyed my little tour through film-dom's murky depths, as well as my twisted viewpoint of our sleaze heritage... The Deuce will never die!!!



(a white one, of course) of her spacious mansion. The action is frequently intercut with wonderfully surreal flights of fantasy — particularly memorable is Godin's climactic redemption through writing, an exhilarating sequence with fireworks dancing in his eyes and the words literally leaping off the page and flowing through the air.

**LARRY RICCI; Montclair, NJ.**

**GIDGET GOES TO COURT (1987).** I'll be the first to admit that I'm an out and out sucker for the current explosion of reality based television programs. Give me a cable channel devoted solely to the likes of JUDGE JUDY, THE REAL WORLD, BIG BROTHER, et al. and I'm one happy spud. After all, watching real life drama unfold, no matter how banal, is almost always more entertaining than being subjected to an achingly inanely scripted show courtesy of "must-see-TV". That's why when I discovered this beautiful little curiosity in the recent SHOCKING VIDEOS catalog, I knew I had to get my hands on it. Thank God I did! Aside from a somewhat grainy picture and a few dry spots, this one is well worth the price of admission. The unbelievable GIDGET GOES TO COURT is the actual jaw dropping, court ordered deposition given grudgingly, by the Lewises, a black Texas family who are desperately trying to cash in on the mother of all insurance scams. Unfortunately for them, they don't possess even a tenth of the brains to pull it off and the results are hilarious. Still, what the family lacks in brains, they more than make up for in low down street smarts. The Lewises are so unabashedly sassy and so in-your-face, they deserve their own sitcom on UPN or BET for Christ sakes! An admirable feat, this clan makes the hard scrambled, rough around the edges characters of GOOD TIMES and SANFORD AND SON look like the prissy COSBY SHOW in comparison. First off, there's the shady step-father who refuses to be videotaped so he dons a stocking mask to obscure his face during the entire 40-minute taping. Then there is Mama, a three hundred pound gargantuan of a woman who doesn't put up with no mess from no one, no how. Especially those lool whiteys in the interview room who are trying to prevent her from getting the mean green. Finally, there is Gidget, a loud and proud sista who skillfully masters the fine art of dodging questions and rolling her eyes. You'll watch in complete and utter awe as she defies all logic by answering questions without actually answering them. And to this already gut busting mix a roomful of stiff, white bread suits and you have a real winner. The ending, which I do not want to spoil here, comes completely out of left field and will leave you convulsing with laughter. Incredible!

**TIMES SQUARE (1980).** It's a given. Whenever a major Hollywood studio teams up with a misguided producer or a lame ass big shot director and attempts to capture the spirit or essence of a counterculture, the end product is either one of two things: completely disastrous (think the mind bending, godawful SKIDOO) or considerably flawed and therefore campily entertaining (think the goofy, yet likable FOXES). The latter usually occurs because somehow the finished product does not quite hit its intended target or reach its full potential. In other words, something, somewhere, is surely amiss. **TIMES SQUARE** is exactly that type of film and that is somewhat of a shame. One can only wonder how this piece of cinema would have turned out had it been in completely different hands. Would the movie have taken a braver avenue and explored the subtle sapphic undertones between the two girls? Would a different director have probed the true motive behind an adult showing up at a 13-year-old runaway's hideout with a dottle of vodka? One may never know. And that is why after the bonanza successes of GREASE and SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, **TIMES SQUARE** does not complete the golden trifecta for producer Robert Stigwood. The story is simple. A young privileged girl, Pamela Pearl (Trini Alvarado), is the sheltered daughter of a local city politician, who is spearheading an effort to clean up Forty Deuce. At a mental hospital she hooks up with tough street girl Nicki Moratto (Robin Johnson) who wants to be a punk rock singer and could not be any more different than Pamela. Together, they form an unlikely alliance and become the Sleaze Sisters. All the while, radio DJ Johnny La Guardia (a miming Tim Curry) acts as a sort of Greek Chorus over the airwaves. The girls throw televisions out windows, wear plastic garbage bags, and inspire a rebellion in other teenage girls who are seeking to escape from their own suburban trappings. Meanwhile, a mostly decent New Wave soundtrack featuring tracks by the Ramones, XTC, Pretenders, Talking Heads, and Roxy Music plays in the background to set the mood and to helpfully remind us that this is a piece of cutting edge cinema. Although the dialogue and writing is sometimes laughably shaky (Nicki suffers from what is termed as a "thinking disorder") and certain plot lines are totally implausible, **TIMES SQUARE** is not without its awkward charms. Alvarado and Johnson play their roles well and the cinematography captures the gritty landscape rather effectively. Still, the real star of the film is a pre-Guliani New York City, where viewers are offered a time capsule-like glimpse of long gone relics from a bygone era. There are the old grindhouses, like the Lyric, with marquees advertising titles such as CRY RAPE, HOUSE OF PSYCHOTIC WOMEN and Bruce Lee flicks, alongside more mainstream fare like 10 and

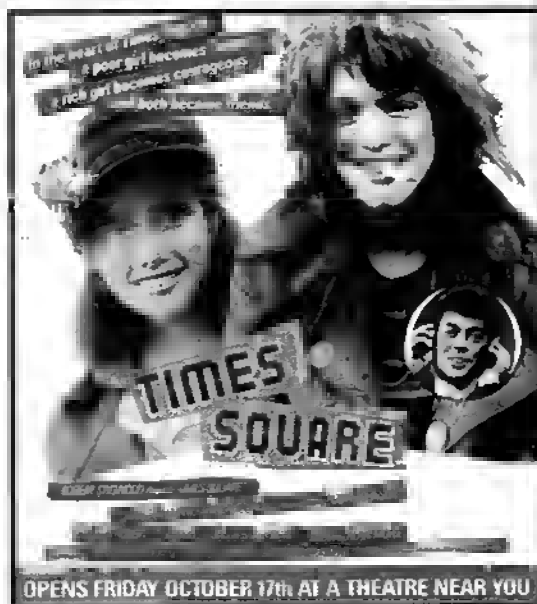
THE ONION FIELD. There are also scenes showing the now non-existent Three Card Monte games, X-rated movie houses and the abandoned Chelsea Piers as well. All in all, unlike its new incarnation, **TIMES SQUARE** is worth a visit.

**MIKE SULLIVAN; Mountaintop, PA.**

Viz Presents **ROGER MELLIE** and **BILLY THE FISH (1991)**. For those unfamiliar with Viz, it's a crass comic magazine from Britain that features vicious swipes at celebrities and figures of the world (like their portrayal of Mother Theresa as a sadistic hypocrite) and comic strips featuring an endless supply of hilariously foul characters (the inbred shotgun-toting Farmer Palmer, the abusive Postman Ploot and the white trash Tasha Slappa clan are just three characters in a cast of possibly thousands). Thanks to the mag's popularity four animated videos based on their more popular characters were released. Arguably the funniest of the four is Roger Mellie. Watch as an insufferable TV presenter falls upward in show business, much to the chagrin of his director friend Tom. Highlights include Roger's gig on **ANTIQUES ROADSHOW** where he insults the guests and smashes the antiques, hosts a kids' show and demands to have a close-up of a dog's penis, participates in a celebrity golf tournament, gets drunk, takes a dump in the sand trap, and pukes all over a bland comedian, but best of all, shows up on **WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?** and punches out relentless imitant John Sessions. Although crudely animated, it's helped immensely by Peter Cook's grizzled performance as Roger, not to mention plenty of scathing laughs aimed directly at the jerk-offs that call themselves TV personalities...Fans of comic surreality also won't want to miss Billy the Fish. Check out what happens when a floating half-boy/half-fish becomes the goalie for a Fulchesler soccer team. The ever-changing dreamlike storyline makes it impossible to synopsise, but the cartoon is full of Discredited Hypnotists, soccer playing Indians and invisible men, spastic pop stars, ridiculous plot conveniences, and insane twists (a millionaire who attempts to buy the soccer team turns out to be a cardboard cut out with a hidden tape recorder). Oddly enough, all of this goofiness is played completely straight and at times resembles an acid dosed Rocky and Bullwinkle. All in all, it's a bizarre antidote to the hollow trendiness that is most of today's animation.

**THE TRIP BACK (1969?)**. Probably one of my more painful high school memories was being forced to sit in an auditorium and listen to some motivational pinhead rant about "the evils of drugs." All of those feelings of dread came back to me while watching this short documentary. Meet Floria Fisher, a former junkie/prostitute (and self proclaimed 50-year-old hippy) who turned her life around and decided to lecture about her experiences to high school kids. Floria condescends to her disinterested audience, trots out every old drug myth (marijuana leads to harder drugs, one hit of acid will instantly turn you insane, etc.) repeatedly tells how smart she is despite the fact that she spouts out questionable facts (England has apparently legalized weed), is full of misguided suggestions (like urging kids to squeal on their friends, and her insistence that addicts should join Synanon) and says things that wouldn't sound out of place coming from a Jerry Lewis character (You're beautiful with young youth). This couldn't be any more repellent, but it is interesting to note that Floria may have been the inspiration behind Amy Sedaris's Jerri Blank character thanks to her troubled past and hideous appearance (Peter Panish hair and mod style clothes).

**MAJIN HUNTER MITSURUGI (1977).** Hooray!! It's another out-of-its-mind kid-show from Japan! Way back in the time of Edo, Japan is being terrorized by giant monsters (natch) and armies of heavily bandaged ninjas. All of these evil forces are being led by a rotting skeleton that's dressed alarmingly similar to that of a Grand Wizard from the KKK. Fortunately a trio of crimefighters (who inexplicably wear coveralls and racing striped motorcycle helmets despite the time period) control a gigantic samurai Majin that's ready to kick rubbery ass. What sets this apart from other Japanese kids' shows is its graphic violence (crucifixions, flaming arrows in the back of heads, constant bloodshed, and this is just in the first two episodes), the trio's odd abilities (one of them travels by kile) and the fact that all the giant monster battles are filmed in stop motion animation. This is a nice departure from the stuntmen in rubber suits — if you can overlook the fact that the animation looks about as sophisticated as a ten-year-old smashing his action figures together. Fun, cut-rate surrealism.







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# HOLY SCREENWRITER, BATMAN!: An Interview With LORENZO SEMPLE, JR.

By DAVID KONOW

Lorenzo Semple, Jr. has had a very successful career as a screenwriter and it all started with the help of a certain caped-crusader. It may have only lasted two seasons, but BATMAN remains one of the most brilliantly fun TV shows in history. With Semple's clever writing, Adam West always knew how to get out of any jam with his bat-intellect, the villains were crafty and colorful, and the souped-up Batmobile went from zero to 180 in six seconds on the way to the scene of the crime. The show was a tremendous break that established Semple's career and he looks back on the show as the best project he's ever been involved in.

After BATMAN, Semple adapted a number of books for the screen. He read THE SPORTING CLUB when it was in galley form, and had the script done by the time the book was published two months later. His adaptation of PRETTY POISON became a cult classic. Two novels he helped to adapt turned into two of the best thrillers of the '70s, THE PARALLAX VIEW and THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR. His adaptation of PAPILLON was one of the highest grossing films of 1974. Then Semple was given the opportunity of a lifetime, to write the remake of KING KONG.

While the film was in production in 1976, famously flamboyant producer Dino DeLaurentis went into hype-hype mode on what was shaping up to be an unprecedented box office triumph. "Nobody cry when the shark die in JAWS," he reminded us, "but when the big monkey die, everybody gonna cry."

To say the least, the critics were not kind to the film when it came out, in fact they were merciless. KONG was a top entry in the 'Golden Turkey Awards' and in the Psychotronic Encyclopedia, Michael Weldon wrote, "It defrauding the public were really a crime, Dino would of gotten the chair for this." KONG, like BATMAN in its day, was derided for being too campy. "The campy things were not popular with serious fans," says Semple. "Batman fans were outraged, FLASH GORDON was the same way. You know that magazine Cinefantastique? One issue had Lorenzo Semple, Jr.'s hate-mail! I was considered a serious trasher of great American themes. I wish I still had the issue!"

Yet opinion may finally be turning around for KONG as it did for BATMAN. When reviewing the DVD release of KING KONG for Fangoria, Matthew Kiemann wrote that KONG was "the first genre film to have a major hold on my imagination. The trailer promises 'The most exciting and original motion picture event of all time,' (they don't make 'em like that anymore), and the film still delivers." Thankfully, now it's okay to come out of the closet and admit Dino's big monkey captured your imagination too.

I spoke with Semple at his home in Los Angeles where we discussed his long and varied career as a screenwriter.

**SHOCK CINEMA: When did you start working professionally as a screenwriter?**

Lorenzo Semple Jr.: I had two plays on Broadway that were not great successes, but adequate. I'd written magazine stories, I got by doing things. I drifted out here after doing those plays and I was still working on

plays and things but I started doing some television writing. I wrote a bunch of pilots for Bill Dozier. We worked several terrible pilots that didn't get on, then I went to Spain to write another play. I'd written a pilot for Bill Dozier and ABC. NUMBER ONE SON, about Charlie Chan's son. Everybody liked the script but then they decided they didn't want anybody ethnic in it, so that put an end to that. So I was living in Spain, I didn't even have telephones there. Bill sent me a cable, he was coming over and ABC had a project for us to do. That was BATMAN. He brought the first four or five comic books. I wasn't a comic fan but naturally I read

**SC: Do you remember what you made per episode to write BATMAN?**

Semple: Probably about \$2,500 or something like that. Somewhere in there. It was way under \$10,000 and I think I got a small royalty for the first ten runs or something. But it wasn't a particularly money making thing. Nobody knew and they didn't know what they had. So I came back from Spain and wrote movies. When they started shooting, I couldn't work as story editor. I rewrote most of the scripts the first year. I liddled around with them and adjusted all of them. It was hard to find writers actually



Burt Ward & Adam West on the Bat-Cycle in BATMAN

them. So it occurred to me immediately, I never had the slightest doubt how it should be done. I said, "It's a wonderful idea, I'll go home and write a script." That's all that was done and it went on without any meetings of any kind. We went over once to New York and we met with various people at ABC, assured them it was going to be a good series and they shot it. That was a great success at the time. I actually worked as story editor on the show from Spain without a telephone in the house; we did it by ordinary mail. There was none of this 'development' or network executives, there was none of that involved in it. It was just done. I don't think a word was ever changed in it.

**SC: How long would it take to put an episode of BATMAN together?**

Semple: I don't really remember to tell you the truth. Those were all half-hour shows, we were only on a year and a half regrettably. Probably because it was a one joke show and probably because it was such a success, it burned itself out. Also, nobody knew what they had in those days. My idea was to get out of television as fast as possible like an idiot. Everybody's idea was to get out of television, do some real stuff where you could make some money. I don't regret (it) but the kind of deals we could of made then. They didn't think they had anything special. I don't even think I got paid as being story consultant. I did it for fun.

**SC: Was working for television considered déclassé in those days?**

Semple: It was, yes. There was the so-called "Golden Age of Television" with Paddy Chayetsky. There was a certain prestige I suppose in the people who did the live dramas. But generally, yes it was highly déclassé. Any episodic thing was really considered beneath...not beneath contempt but joked about. It was a thing to get out of it you could. Very few people foresaw what a huge industry it would be. This was 1965-66 we're talking about.

**SC: Did BATMAN inspire other television superhero shows like THE GREEN HORNET?**

Semple: Yes, Bill Dozier did it (THE GREEN HORNET). It was a big failure. I first was gonna write the pilot of it, then I sorta liddled with it. It was plain it was gonna be too much like BATMAN if I did it. There wasn't much difference, they were exactly the same as BATMAN. It's even campier than BATMAN actually. THE GREEN HORNET never succeeded at all but it did discover Bruce Lee. I

remember Bill went to San Francisco and said "I found this incredible guy that does Kung Fu," which we thought was made up! Sounded like something Bill made up. 'Karate' people had heard of.

**SC: So as the comic book went, Bruce Wayne was orphaned at a young age when his parents were murdered...**

Semple: "Murdered by criminals." In a sense that's preposterous (to say). Who else would murder you except criminals? That stuck in my head and set the tone for how BATMAN was written. Very obvious statements made seriously. That's a very typical thing that Batman might have said to Robin. Adam was an extremely nice guy and he was perfect for the part. He didn't take it so seriously. In the pilot, there was a line where he's supposed to say, "Robin let's bug that car." As he read the line, he said "Robin, let's...bug that car," with a little pause before the word bug. The director told him to pick up that line. Adam told him, "I'm a bat. Bats eat insects. Every time I hear the word bug, it causes a little psychological hesitation!" He's a lot like Batman. He was a really nice guy. It never went to his head.

**SC: So was it a challenge to write a superhero who is extremely intelligent as well as perpetually clever villains like The Riddler?**

Simple: I bought a riddle book and I had more fun with really stupid riddles. I'd adapt riddles to (the character). The inferences that Batman drew from them were so preposterous. He'd say, "It can only mean one thing," which would absolutely be out of left field. That was the fun of them. This whole business of "Holy so-and-so" that Robin said, I made that up. That never was in the comic books. That was based on the Tom Swift books which I read as a kid. There was a character named Mr. Damon who'd say, "Bless my life escape," whatever would fit in the plot. I just figured I'd use that device, holy this and holy that, which is one of the things that people remember most. Occasionally people say on football broadcasts, "Holy first down!" Every once in a while you'd see a reference to it so it snuck into the language. I really enjoyed BATMAN. It's the best thing I've written by a long shot.



Jessica Lange in KING KONG's mecha-palm

**SC: I'm 28 and remember growing up with BATMAN, so I'm a second generation fan and I know that when the show developed, the idea was to appeal to both younger and older viewers.**

Simple: There's very sophisticated jokes (on the show), such as they are. Nobody knew what to make of the show when it first came out. The reason why it was so popular its first few weeks, people in colleges would stop everything to watch it, they thought it was a terrible show. They thought it was written by idiots who didn't realize they were being funny. Of course, needless to say, we were highly sophisticated. It probably should of been better with a laugh track strange-enough, because it is a comedy.

**SC: In the '70s, the show was really popular in reruns. Were you aware there was a new audience for the show?**

Simple: Oh sure, absolutely. It's still on, I still catch it on TV. They're still very good, some of them are still very funny shows. And the movie was extremely funny.

**SC: Right, you had a film in the theaters while the show was still big.**

Simple: At that time, other shows were pulling episodes together and calling it a theatrical film. THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. did that. They took four episodes and put them together. Many didn't know the BATMAN movie was a totally original film. It was done on the cheap, it was really thrown together, but I thought it was good. It was genuinely fun.

**SC: When did you write your first screenplay?**

Simple: It was after BATMAN, which was in '66, '67. I did a movie called FATHOM.

**SC: With Raquel Welch.**

Simple: That's right, which she won't even cite in her filmography. It could of been very good. It's so confused. I watched it a couple of times, and I really didn't know what was gonna happen! I didn't know who done it or what they'd done! I don't know if you've ever heard of MODESTY BLAISE.

**SC: Sure.**

Simple: MODESTY BLAISE, as you know, was a very successful comic-book in New York before they made a movie. Fox bought a novel called FATHOM, about a big, tall girl. She was called Fathom because she was six feet tall. They thought that would be their Modesty Blaise.

**SC: So they wanted to do a whole series like James Bond.**

Simple: About Fathom, exactly. The movie MODESTY BLAISE came out and it was a spectacular flop. So that cooled off the whole project, they were stuck with it. They gave me a producer on the movie who was also a writer. I had written a really good fifteen pages, and I went to this producer. I'd never been out

here before and I was in awe of this producer and being on a lot. And he said, "We'll just throw this away and you and I will start again." The plot was worked out doggedly instead of by inspiration. The director got on extremely badly with Raquel. She wouldn't speak to him. I was told that she gave him a note saying, "Fuck you" on the first day of shooting and wouldn't speak to him. The Spanish censors, Franco was still in command then, there were a lot of things in the script they didn't like, so a lot of the script was thrown away on the first days shooting. FATHOM was meant to be a series, but it was killed. THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR was also supposed to be the first of a series.

**SC: What I thought was most interesting about THREE DAYS OF THE CONDOR was the relationship between Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway. They fell for each other under extraordinary and dangerous circumstances. How were you able to make a romance like that believable?**

Simple: Beats me! I think you have to credit the actors. I really think the credit has to be given, less to the writing really than the chemistry of the actors. The attempt was to be realistic. I think it damages any possibility of a love relationship if a situation is too silly. It was very low-tech, which was one of the nice things. No computers, no infra-red night vision.

**SC: So in that film, with the less you have in the film, the better and more effective a twist can be?**

Simple: It throws the emphasis on the people more than on the gadgets.

**SC: In the film OUT OF SIGHT, George Clooney and Jennifer Lopez, like Dunaway and Redford, are trapped in a tight situation, the trunk of a car, and also fall in love. Clooney mentions CONDOR as a similar situation. How do you feel about the film becoming a pop culture reference?**

Simple: It's very complimentary. That movie has been imitated many, many times. The basic situation of that film is very banal now. You actually take for granted now your own people trying to kill you. It would be astonishing if they weren't, that would be the real twist.

**SC: What do you remember about working on PAPILLON?**

Simple: The book had been a huge best-seller. Producer Robert Dorfman had bought it and sold it around the world with Steve McQueen playing the lead, and he didn't have a contract with Steve McQueen! At the time, McQueen was hot and heavy with Ali MacGraw and he didn't want to make a movie. He decided he didn't want to do any movie. Actually, William Goldman wrote the first script of PAPILLON, a very good script. I was told McQueen just said "All shit!" and threw it away! Didn't read it, because he didn't want to do it. Frank Schaffner (the director) was a good friend. The specific job was to persuade McQueen to sign a contract to do it. That was the only requirement at this stage. I worked on a script with Frank and had a couple of famous meetings with McQueen. He was popping pills and asked, "You guys really wanna make this movie?" He understood the role perfectly, he just didn't want to do any movie. He claimed his "CIA friends" told him it was unsafe in Jamaica, where we were going to shoot it! He tried every possible way to get out of this thing. Dorfman finally shamed him into doing it, by giving him a speech, saying, "You're not serious Mr. McQueen! You're not a serious artist!" So he signed the contract to do it. At this stage, Dustin Hoffman was not involved. They spent so much money on it, they decided they needed another star.

We were down there shooting the film, we talked to some old, retired guards. The reason Devil's Island was abolished from the penal colony, it was too easy to escape from. There was no attempt to stop people from escaping. The odds were most people perished in the jungle or were eaten by sharks. There was no effort to keep you from escaping there.

**SC: You collaborated a lot on that film with Franklin Schaffner. Did you usually work closely with directors?**

Simple: No. It was so different in those days. This was before the auteur theory had taken root. The director was hired and you worked for the producer or the studio so to speak. I didn't work with the directors. PRETTY POISON, Noel (Black) was a good friend and he started the project, but not much input on the script.

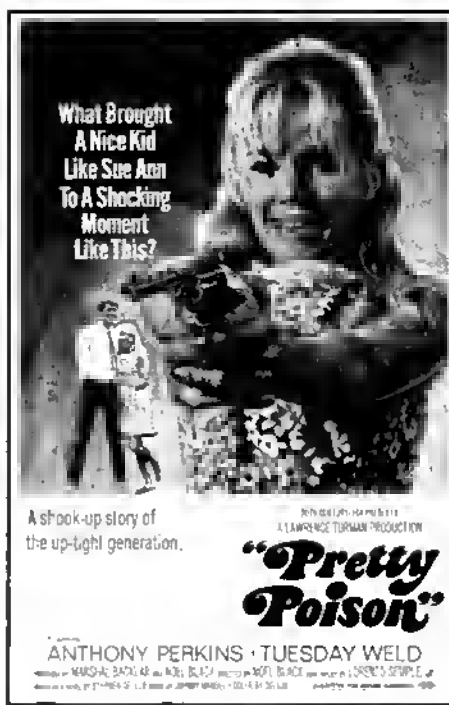
**SC: How close was the final film of PRETTY POISON to your script?**

Simple: It wound up too much (like the script). I don't think the director used a good deal of imagination on it. I remember the first day of rehearsal, Tuesday Weld was reading her lines and she changed one little thing. Noel wanted her to do the script exactly as it was written. It was very inflexibly done, exactly the way it was written. The best way is somewhere in-between.

**SC: PRETTY POISON has developed a cult following...**

Simple: Cult, yes. The cult mostly consists of people who don't buy tickets to movie theaters!

Again, that was from a novel. A lot of people think it's an original. It was very close to the novel. (Producer) Larry / CONTINUED on Pg. 47



# SHARP RELIEF

by TAVIS  
RIKER

All is love and peace for our fall collection of rock burnouts on the road, Scotsman PAL's in New York, music films from the dawn of sound, and bootleg Beatle parodies. I'd better finish this column before 'the man' rains on my parade.

Any Doors fan worth his (or her?) salt has heard of **Jim Morrison's** long unseen arthouse movie **HWY: AN AMERICAN PASTORAL** ([www.superhappyfun.com](http://www.superhappyfun.com)). Well, we have acquired a copy of said unseen, and guess what? Not half bad! Directed by Jim and several 'friends' and with sound by Doors engineer Bruce Bolnick, this freestyle road movie could be called 'Vanishing Pint'. We kick off with Jimbo bathing in a spring, then hiking through to the aforementioned HWY. The endless take of Jim hitchhiking makes Monte Hellman look like Michael Bay. Things pick up when Jim 'finds' a car and takes off (as a really bad Grace Slick imitation brays on the 'radio'). When he comes upon the sad sight of a mortally wounded dog on the road, things get primal, and beers get cracked. Back in LA, we get an (too) extensive drive-by tour (CHICO AND THE MAN comes to mind). Jim makes some calls ("I, uh, wasted him?"), urinates successfully, then hits the Sunset Strip for some late night action. We end up with Jim doing a little ledge walking, and a classic "the film runs out" ending. The fact that HWY never stops rambling gives it consistency, so that a 'love it or hate it' quality resides. Loved it. No doubt Oliver Stone watched HWY frame by frame, as he appropriated chunks of the film and dropped them into THE DOORS where he felt like it.

Another time capsule was unearthed when a rare early 70's compilation of **Harry Nilsson** came our way. The tape starts with a BEAT CLUB performance of "Everybody's Talkin'," followed by an amazing appearance on **PLAYBOY AFTER DARK** (check out a swingin' SKIDOO-era Otto Preminger on the couch!) singing "Together" and "Good Old Desk." But the piece de resistance was a BBC special, **THE MUSIC OF NILSSON**. Rock history has painted Nilsson as a major party animal and a minor artist. Think again. The

we get a Shatner-styled 'Rocket Man Redux' as 3 Harry's harmonize around the piano. The Nairobi Trio also make an appearance for an amusing "Lime in the Coconut." Even a couple of songs from THE POINT

(which, along with "Everybody's Talkin'," was his commercial peak) get aired (yes, he makes fun of them). While he might not have survived the booze-and-blow fueled 70's and 80's, Harry was definitely a cool songwriter and a magnetic performer, and "The Music of Nilsson" proves it. The tape ends with some mega-rare footage of an obviously 'medicated' Harry and John Lennon making an appearance at a Central Park charity event. Mmm. Thanks to **EYE TV** (Tony Pradlik, 14 Fieldstone Dr. #348, Hartsdale, NY 10530) for a great blast from the past.

When Film Forum in NYC announced a rare program of Vitaphone music shorts from the late 20's-early 30's, we assembled the Sharp Relief Krew for a rare night on the town. When the Curator of 'The Vitaphone Project' told us that some of these films hadn't been seen by an audience since they were first shown in the roaring 20's, we knew it was gonna be weird. Designed for showing 'after the newsreel and before the feature', these earliest of music videos showcased mostly vaudeville performers and jazz bands. Highlights included Ben Pollack's Park Central Orchestra (with Benny Goodman at age like, 14), and a clip from 1929's **GOLD DIGGERS OF BROADWAY** which featured a great pre-Tiny Tim "Tiptoe Through the Tulips." Best of all was the mind-boggling **GOOD MORNING, EVE** by Leon Errol (who was supposedly

hammered throughout filming). This eye-popping three-strip Technicolor short has it all — pre-code risqué dialogue, dancers in skimpy outfits, cheesy jokes, and time travel. If a Vitaphone program makes it to your town's arthouse or film festival, mark it on your calendar — it's a trip back to the 'Jazz Age' that looks like it was filmed yesterday.

A 'Jazz Age' completely dissed by Ken Burns' **JAZZ** was the fusion era of the late 60's-early 70's, so naturally we at Sharp Relief have chosen to stockpile as many rare performances from that era as we can get, and some amazing tapes have arrived!

**Miles Davis** was certainly on the cutting edge of the electric jazz movement, and two sets with very different bands show just how many great musicians aligned with Davis to bring jazz up to date. For the scorecard, the Copenhagen '69 show is the "Bitches Brew" band with Corea/Shorter/DeJohnette/Holland, and the REALLY wacked Berlin '71 show is Bartz/Henderson, the percussion trio Alias/Chandler/Forman, and the amazing Keith Jarrett (with a wicked 'frol' on organ!). In the two years between shows, Miles TOTALLY retooled his band (from eloquent bop stylings in '69 to wah-wah trumpet and Motown funk in '71). Miles hits the stage in both shows sounding cool and looking cooler, and the music/musicians definitely evoke that period — experimental, in constant motion, and deeply groovy. We miss Miles.

We set the Wayback Machine to 1986 for our next entry, a concert video that we saw 'in person.' **BIG COUNTRY LIVE IN NEW YORK** is a straightforward record of the four-piece 'bagpipe gullar' group from Scotland blasting their way through a spirited set at New York's Pier. You get barn burners like "Harvest Home" and "Look Away" (and they closed with a rockin' cover of "Honky Tonk Women," available only on a rarities CD at their website) and they DON'T play "In a Big Country." Although they were 'one-hit wonders' here in the States, Big Country did put out several decent follow-up albums and were always an amazing live band. For fans only? Perhaps. Did we see ourselves in the audience shots? Not yet. Again the internet helped us trol down memory lane to the long lost PAL's of the 80's. Gracias.

Still in the 'timewarp' window; **Karel Reisz** and **Tony Richardson's** 1955 short **MOMMA DON'T ALLOW** is a remarkable piece that gives us a glimpse of late 50's British nightlife. Both directors went on to success in the 60's (Richardson with **TOM JONES** and Reisz with **THIS SPORTING LIFE**) and serious weirdness in the 70's — Richardson's **NED KELLY(?)** and Reisz with **WHO'LL STOP THE RAIN(!)**. We toggle between the band luning up (The Chris Barber Jazz Band, with Lonnie 'Mr Skiffle' Donegan) and various folks at their day jobs, counting the minutes until they can gear up and hit the dance floor. And hit the dance floor they do, twisting and shouting big time, all captured ventriloquist style, with senous smoke and drink aloft. Outstanding.

With "Beatles 1" (hilariously devoid of "Strawberry Fields Forever") ramming the charts worldwide, it's only fair that we give equal time to the greatest of lab parodies, **The Rutles**. We originally wanted to run with a review of the DVD reissue of **ALL YOU NEED IS CASH**, which is fine, but with the commentary track only featuring Eric Idle, we dug deeper and found a CD bootleg by **Neil Innes**, with his original demos and extra songs, endearingly titled "Rutles to Lei." Wow — 34 tracks and 74 minutes of pure semi-genius as Neil

and his chosen prelab four (including the amazing guitarist Ollie Halsall) rip through all the Rutles' (almost) chart-toppers, from "Gooseslep Mama" to "Cheese and Onions". Sublime. Happily, Innes has also compiled 2 CD's of his solo recordings, "Recollections." From his Bonzo Dog Band days to his spot-on Dylan and Elton John parodies, Neil has always delivered, and the Spinal Tap Collective should tip their

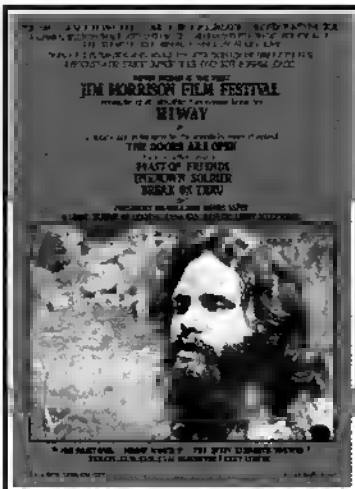
cap. Neil is playing ultra-rare Stateside gigs this fall, check [NeilInnes.org](http://NeilInnes.org) for more info.

We can't go too long without a quick dose of Prog Rock, and this column's contenders are **Shawn Lane** with his "Powers of Ten Live," and **David Torn** with "Splattercell-OAH". Shawn's record is a '92 live recording, from his own archive, featuring dense, classically influenced tunes, jaw-drop playing by Shawn on guitar and Sean Rickman on drums, and solid support on keys and sax. Sold! David's record is truly 21st Century Jazz, with Loops and Reloops galore, all tied down by David's supreme pocket.

**NEXT TIME** · DVD's and Imaginary Days!

**SHARP RELIEF WILL RETURN**

Thanks: Anne Leighton, Joe Salirani, Julius, Andy, Metal Blade, WB Jazz.



special is basically a PBS-styled 'singer at the piano' format, but with several HEAD-styled subversions (cutting to a sleeping audience, etc.). All the songs (including "1941," "Without Her" and "Think About Your Troubles") are classic Nilsson, kind of a less bitter, more melancholy Randy Newman. On the video side,







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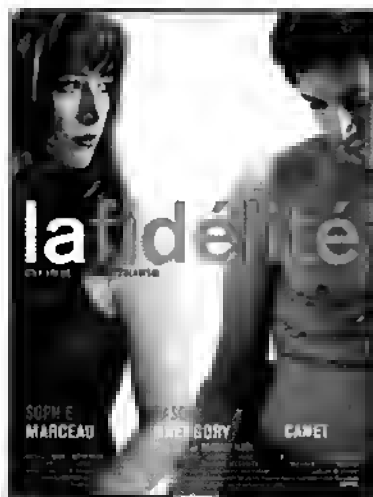
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# NEW RELEASES



**FIDELITY** [La Fidélité] (European Trash Cinema; 2000). Andizej Zulawski is one of my favorite directors, because even when he makes a bad movie, it's a fascinating mess. The latest outing from the man behind **POSSESSION** even stars Zulawski's long-time partner Sophie Marceau, who took a break from Hollywood lulls like David Spade's **LOST AND FOUND** for this volatile erotic drama. Marceau plays acclaimed, artsy-fartsy photographer Clélia, who's just been hired by a sleazy Paris tabloid to help upgrade their rep. Of course, every desperate Frenchman tries to hit on the lair Clélia, with her own insatiable appetites leading to an afternoon one-couch-stand with a pick-up named Cleve (Pascal Greggory). To Clélia's surprise, this guy is rich,

compassionate, a bit dull, and instantly in love — as she's suddenly thrust into a serious romance and upcoming marriage. Ah, but her newspaper's other photographer, Nemo (Guillaume Canel), is a young buck who begins to invade her life with his camera, tempts Clélia with his dangerous edge and ultimately tests her fidelity. If you only know Marceau as that sexy French chick from **BRAVEHEART**, this smoldering role will be a revelation, as a thoroughly screwed-up, porcelain beauty who's suddenly thrust into Paris high society and an obsessive relationship, while craving to pursue her own happiness (no matter how destructive it gets). Along with wonderfully cynical jabs at modern-day media, Clélia's prolonged turmoil includes a wedding, a scandal, manipulation, murder, loss, and a bittersweet aftertaste. At 160 minutes, Zulawski takes his time documenting Clélia's joyride into the abyss, and compared to his earlier fare, it's surprisingly sedate yet far richer in emotional rewards. For Zulawski, this was definitely one from the heart.

**DEAD OR ALIVE 2: BIRDS** (Crimson Cult Video; 2001) and **VISITOR Q** (2001). If you've seen the apocalyptic finale of Takashi Miike's first **DEAD OR ALIVE**, you probably wonder how he'd be able to make a sequel. Easy! Come up with an entirely new story, with the same lead actors playing different characters! Unfortunately, while most sequels strive to out-do the original, this is both slower and less compelling. Again set amongst a criminal underworld of battling Japanese Yakuza and Chinese Triads, Mizuki (Sho Aikawa) is a bleach-blond assassin who takes payment for a hit (commissioned by TETSUO's Shinya Tsukamoto) that was actually fulfilled by a different killer, and soon the hunt is on! During his escape, Mizuki meets this compelling hitman, Shuichi (Riki Takeuchi), who, in a twist of fate, is a childhood pal! The two then return to their old island village, reminisce and relive old fun; and during these sappy stretches, I began wondering why Miike connected this to the DOA franchise at all. Thankfully, the second half pulls together a bit, as Mizuki and Shuichi's work for a traveling children's theatre is intercut with the ultra-grim carnage on their old turf. Miike even takes a surreal route when the pair return to their jobs, but donate all of their blood money to impoverished children — blowing away human targets, as cute angel wings sprout from their backs. Heck, I guess they're just good-hearted lugs after all! Even more shapeless than its predecessor, DOA 2 lacks the driving visuals that made the first so hypnotic, and replaces it with an awkward, sentimental center. Miike packs a lot of scattershot ideas into only 97 minutes, and despite another finale that leaves no wiggle room for a follow-up, the guy is already preparing Part 3...Takashi Miike churns out his movies, so if one disappoints, the next will come along in a couple months — and could be as insanely-comical as **VISITOR Q**. Digitally-shot, it begins like low-grade sexploitation, as a schoolgirl prostitute deals with her latest pick-up. Shot like cheap porn, it's an abrasive way to piss off delicate audience members, after which, we're introduced to our screwed-up family. A teenage boy is abused by bullies, and in return, mercilessly beats his mother (Shungiku Uchida). When she's alone, scar-covered mom quietly shoots up heroin in her bedroom and works as a hooker to pay for her habit. And

father (Kenichi Endo) is a scandalized reporter who can't make love to his wife, since he's obsessed with his teen whore (who reminds him of his wayward daughter). If life weren't grim enough, father invites home a live-in guest (who beat Dad in the head with a rock, for no apparent reason!) and this stranger becomes a catalyst that pushes our destructive family through their emotional barriers (shades of Renoir's **BOUDU SAVED FROM DROWNING**) and into ever-more deranged areas. Dad tries to re-ignite his journalistic career, but only ends up murdering his favorite prostitute and hacking up her naked body on camera! And every time you think Mike has hit his threshold, think again. Mom begins to obsessively lactate. Pop screws his dead whore — and for the slapstick moment of the new millennium, just wait until rigor mortis kicks in! Definitely not for all tastes, its video veneer gives the proceedings a creepy voyeuristic edge, and only in Japan can dismemberment lead to marital reconciliation. Brutal beyond words and brilliantly absurd, it's the most demented vision of family dysfunction since Sogo Ishii's **THE CRAZY FAMILY**.

**LITTLE OTIK** [Olesánek] (2000). For this modern interpretation of the 19th century Czech fairy tale, director Jan Svankmajer again mixes live action with moments of stop-motion animation, and the result is an unsettling, violent and lovably surreal look at the perils of parenthood. Married Bozenka (Veronika Zilková) and Karel (Jan Hartl) are unable to bare children, which has them both depressed and delusional. While vacationing in the country, Karel rips up a small tree stump, carves it into the vague shape of an infant and presents it to Bozenka. She instantly imagines that it's a real child — her child, in fact — and over the next nine months, she takes a pregnancy and becomes increasingly squirrely. But the fun begins when these new 'parents' bring baby Otik home to meet the neighbors, because this gnarled



lump of wood and roots has somehow sprung to life! Svankmajer's animation creates a twitching mass of branches dressed in baby clothes, with its knothole 'mouth' filled with ragged teeth (or sometimes a solitary eyeball). Otik's unquenchable appetite and rapid growth makes secrecy difficult, especially when it engorges on the family cat, their postman and a nosy social worker. Meanwhile, a young girl named Alzbelka realizes something fishy is going on, and when reading a book of fairy tales, notices that the legend of Olesánek mirrors this couple's child. So as Karel threatens to chop up Otik, his wife pleads for him not to kill their baby and people continue to disappear, lonely Alzbelka makes a new friend. Although filled with sick laughs and bizarre imagery (such as a dirty old man with animated trousers), at its core, this is a sad, desperate drama about the monstrous extremes where human need can lead us. Although a bit overlong at 125 minutes, **LITTLE OTIK** is a brilliantly warped vision.



**SCRAPBOOK** (Sub Rosa; 1999). After the success of **BLAIR WITCH**, the door for handheld, shot-on-video horror fare was flung wide open, with every type of amateur effort vying for attention (while wasting their viewers' time and money). That brings us to this raw profile of a psychopath and his female hostage, courtesy of filmmaker Eric Slanze (ICE FROM THE SUN). Tommy Bando stars as Leonard, a whiny serial killer who keeps a Polaroid-packed scrapbook of his crimes, in hopes of someday being famous on talk shows. His latest victim is bulch-haired Clara (Emily Haack), who is taken prisoner, raped, tormented, pissed on, and (worst of all) is forced to listen to Leonard's slandering, liresome rants about his gay dad and a dozen years worth of murders. Never remotely believable, the script (written by Biondo) never addresses the fact that any of his victims could kick Leonard's scrawny ass within seconds. Meanwhile, Haack plays the poor victim card at every turn, and it's hard to sympathize with someone who's unable to bust down a cheap pasteboard door in order to save their own life. Hell, I've had old girlfriends who did more damage during a simple argument! Sure, it boasts a homemade edginess, but it's also artless in every conceivable way, with yawn-inducing plot twists — such as when Clara

confesses her love and allegiance, only to viciously turn the tables once Leonard is seduced into stupidity. We've only seen that cliché about 1000 times, right? Plus, it's always telling when a scriptwriter includes an on-screen blowjob, and he's playing the recipient! Plodding, self-important and far from subversive, it offers a maniac's lifestyle, as distilled through puerile 'gosh, being a psycho is cool' fantasies.

**NUTBAG** (www.frightflix.com; 2000). Promising serial killer thrills and delivering only crude, misogynistic tedium, this is a sad excuse for a shock item. Mack Hail stars as our killer, who lives in a cheap Las Vegas apartment filled with porno pix and horror movie posters, and spends his evenings slicing up sluts. When his building manager gets pissed about late rent, he simply kills the guy. Why not, since the police never seem to notice any of these missing persons? Our Nutbag's whiny narration is instantly tiresome, as this windbag rants about "faggots" and "bitches" and "whores" (oh my!), while lamenting his past. *Boo hoo. My whore of a mother was killed by a black guy, so now I'm a sexist, racist mass murderer. Pity me.* Soon it's non-stop, no-grade titillation, as he straps one gal to his bed, nude and spread-eagle, before carving up her crotch. But as this dickhead continues to "take out the garbage," any viewer with a triple-digit I.Q. will be bored senseless by his shot-on-video tripe. Even at only 76 minutes, it's snail-paced, and the most asinine moment has him spotting a happy couple in the park. After ludicrously ripping up grass with his bare hands for a full minute, it cuts to this couple, bound and tortured in Nutbag's apartment, without any logical way they could've gotten there! At least its Vegas backdrop provides visual appeal, as well as a supporting cast of skanky naked broads. Of course, in Vegas, you can find gals who'll screw a Great Dane for a C-note, so cheap talent is everywhere! Writer-director Nick Palumbo has produced an empty piece of shit. Less horrific than pathetic, it's aimed straight at viewers who're unable to talk to real women and are desperate for new jack-off material.

**ATTACK THE GAS STATION** (Video Junkie; 1999). Korean cinema is the new hot commodity for cult movie fanatics, and this flashy dose of comic exuberance from director Kim Sang-Jin certainly proves why. In the middle of Seoul, a quartet of juvenile delinquents get their kicks out of robbing and vandalizing an all-night gas station; and 24 hours later, they're again bared and hit the exact same place! This time around, the station doesn't have any cash, so these four violent punks come up with a half-witted plan to take over the station and hold its owner and employees hostage. They extort some customers, stuff others into their car trunks, and when a local gang stops by for their collection money, they're also taken captive. As the number of whiny hostages trapped in the owner's office grows, so does the craziness — as they're forced to light each other for the amusement of their nitwit overseer (who wields a big tucking stick). The cops pass by, but are too dim to realize anything is wrong, a makeshift boy band performs, and these guys even have the balls to order sumptuous Chinese meals and refuse to pay the delivery man! Twice! During this long night, social classes are turned upside down, as the strongest are abused, others are empowered, and each thug has a flashback to what trauma or failure led them to their current behavior. But primarily, it's an exercise in anarchy and disaffected youth, filled with unexpected twists, plus a hilarious stand-off finale between cops, gangsters and pissed-off delivery men. This amazing chunk of criminal delirium was a huge success in its homeland, and certainly proves that Korean audiences have more discerning (and eccentric) tastes than the US mainstream.

**VERSUS** (Blackest Heart; 2000). One of 666 pertals to the "ether side" happens to be in the middle of Japan's apily-named Festival of Resurrection, and thus begins this style-over-substance undead fest from director Ryuhei Kitamura. Following a



cut it for me. The film is too often lost in its silly, contrived scenario and the characters are such broadly-played, bland cartoons that we don't care if they live or die. Its outdoor locale quickly gets repetitious, as do the slo-mo fight scenes, and when its barely-there script suddenly turns into an ancient (and extremely talky) struggle between old souls, I was thoroughly bored. All bluster and few brains, it's a frantic-but-quickly-forgotten outing, best appreciated through an alcohol haze.

**DIRTY COP NO DONUT 2: I AM A PIG** (Sub Rosa; 2001). The first DIRTY COP was a pleasantly abrasive surprise, which took a COPS-esque scenario to its hilariously vile extremes. It concluded with the viewer wondering if "officer" Gus Kimball (Joel D. Wynkoop, the only man who makes Ron Jeremy look appealing) was a cop at all, or just a basketcase with a fake badge. This continuation — again consisting of raw 'real' footage — has institutionalized Gus reformed for his crimes, but the moment he's released, a sycophantic lanbey with a camera turns him back into his snarly old self. Together they hit the road, but their criminal misadventures don't amount to much. Because instead of focusing exclusively on greasy Gus, this installment bounces between our Dirty Cop, and his cousin Simen (Donald Farmer) and brother Ed, who head off on their own video-captured hijinx. These two talentless simps end up destroying everything that made the first film so memorable, as they kidnap the mayor's daughter (Brooklyn Milan) and all-too-easily convince her to pose for nude photos. Later, Gus discovers that his bro has made a fortune selling the video from his earlier crime spree and wants restitution. The finale completely self-destructs, and after this lurd, I'm avoiding any future entries. Less a mock-"shockumentary" than a cure for insomnia, the sequel is (hard to believe) even cheaper than the original. The pertains with Gus were directed by Wynkoop and Bill Cassinelli, while Simen's scenes are by Tim Ritter, and all of them have the finesse of a cheap porno loop, but with none of the entertainment value. It's 80 long minutes of irritating camerawork, amateurish actors and insufferably dull material.

## DVDementia

Most ne-budget, shot-on-video, one-location productions are difficult to endure, but writer-director Max Allan Collins turns those potential liabilities into a fascinating technical exercise. **REAL TIME: SIEGE AT LUCAS STREET MARKET** (Troma; 2001) hauls the viewer into a mini-mart-rebbery-turned-police-stand-off, as two dumb-as-dirt thieves kill a cop and take a handful of people (including Brinke Stevens) hostage. As its title suggests, the story occurs in real time, and it's entirely stitched together from 'found' footage — including surveillance cameras inside and outside the store, police videos and news broadcasts. The human drama is unsuitable at times, but this 70-minute crime flick still held my interest, thanks to its playful format. Its alternate angle function (which porno fans are undoubtedly familiar with) allows you to watch the whole movie from an entirely different perspective, plus there are trailers, deleted scenes, auditions, and three different audio commentaries that range from the purely entertaining to the more cinematically insightful. It's a terrific package that demonstrates the potential of DVD for even the smallest indie effort.

There's nothing inherently wrong with believing in UFO's. Then again, a small segment has taken that conviction to its most eccentric extremes, as seen in the amusing **SIX DAYS IN ROSWELL** (Synapse Films; 2000). Part-documentary and part-staged, it chronicles Rich Krenfeld's misadventures in Roswell, New Mexico, during their 50th anniversary UFO-crash festivities. Every imaginable nutjob is on display, selling ridiculous alien merchandise, babbling about conspiracies and recalling personal sightings. They're all a bit clueless, but the film is never mean-spirited, and Krenfeld fits right in with this crowd, since he's a STAR TREK fanatic who collects worthless old crap and lives with his mom. There's also no shortage of extras on the DVD, including trailers, bios, a making-of featurette, clips from the filmmakers' early home-made efforts, 35 minutes of outtakes, plus audio commentary — which is often funnier than the actual film — by Krenfeld, producer Roger Nygard (TREKKIES) and director Timothy B. Johnson.

It's been 15 years since I'd last seen Bill Lustig's **MANIAC** (Anchor Bay; 1986), and this sleazy stalk-er-fest has aged surprisingly well. Filled with old-fashioned gore, mother-obsessed dementia, brutalized females, and long-gone Times Square locales, its gritty edge and Jee Spinell's indelibly-tormented (and

disturbingly sweaty) deviance makes this a welcome blast from the past. Extras include numerous trailers and TV-spots; a 19-minute radio Q&A with Spinell, Lustig and hottie co-star Caroline Munro; a huge gallery of photos and old ads; plus a hilarious compilation of its most scathing reviews! The commentary by Lustig, Tom Savini, editor Lorenzo Marinelli, and Spinell's assistant Luke Walter offers raucous insights — including the highs and lows of filming in NYC, Spinell's creepier contributions to the role, and even Savini's nose job. No question, its coolest bonus is David Gregory's **THE JOE SPINELL STORY**. This 50-minute tribute to the late actor revels in rare footage, his pernickiest marriage, drinking, drugs, plus anecdotes from Bill Lustig, Frank Pesce, Robert Forsler, Richard Lynch, Buddy Giovanni, Jason Miller, and many more. It's a must for Spinell fanatics!



**THE COMMONWEALTH** [La Comunidad] (European Trash Cinema; 2000). Director Alex de la Iglesia continues his increasingly-impressive body of work with this warped horror-comedy. Arguably, his most assured project, it's a beautifully constructed tale steeped in paranoia, greed and pitch black humor. After opening credits as evocative as any Saul Bass offering, we meet Julia (Carmen Maura), a middle-aged real estate agent who falls in love with a luxurious apartment and decides to move in while the place is vacant. The others in the building mistake her for a new tenant and treat her suspiciously, even as an over-aged lanboy named Charli (Eduardo Anluna) plays voyeur on Julia's shower and masturbates in a Darth Vader helmet. But that's only the tip of her worries. When a water pipe breaks in the apartment above — belonging to an old hermit — the fire department is called in and discover a long-deceased corpse. Later that night, Julia sneaks into this filthy upstairs flat and finds a hidden fortune of 300 million pesetas (about \$1.7 million)! There's only one major problem: her creepy neighbors have been plotting to steal the guy's money for years, and now conspire against Julia. They hold a fake party to lure her away, send the building gigolo after her, ransack her apartment, and happily sell each other out at a moment's notice. Just imagine Roman Polanski directing IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD! As this comedy of errors grows increasingly vicious, Julia finds herself disposing of pesky corpses while tending off potential renters, and it ends in a jaw-dropping rooftop chase. Maura gives a remarkable comic performance, and it's no wonder that she won the Goya (Spain's equivalent of the Oscar) for Best Actress. Hell, she deserves an award just for wearing those piss-ugly business suits! Filled with maniacal laughs and striking visuals, it's a twisted gem.



likably goofy performance helps us to cheer for this wrestling-wannabe, who dreams of himself as an Elvis-lookalike singer-wrestler. But while its finale is spectacularly violent, I would've preferred something a little less predictably hokey. It's lightweight fun, and probably more satisfying to wrestling fans (who'll appreciate its nuances) than your everyday Asian film addict.

**SHORT TAKES:** Dario Argento returns to his giallo roots in **NON HO SONNO** [Sleepless] (2000), and while this stylish mystery might not offer anything new, at least it isn't as wretched as his **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**. When a sadistic creep loses a life containing evidence of several 17-year-old murders, he hacks his way through the cast to retrieve it — following his same old pattern, based on a gnm nursery rhyme. Max Von Sydow adds class to the plot as retired police chief Moretti, who worked on the original crimes (which were blamed on a now-deceased dwarf) and teams up with the grown son of an earlier victim in hopes of solving this case. Is it a copycat? The original fiend? As Moretti and others confront ghosts from their pasts, Argento offers up the type of high-class EuroSleaze that used to fill Deuce grindhouses. It has spectacularly-staged murders, inept dubbing, dead whores, graphic Sergio Stivalletti gore, a Goblin score, plus a masked killer with a penchant for flesh penetration — due to phallic knives, pens and even an English horn! It's a delightful throwback that makes you realize just how badly recent US horror movies suck...In **MAD JACK** (Vista Street Entertainment / www.trashvideo.com; 2000), writer-director Brad Sykes again proves he can crank out exploitation on a budget, even if it's predictable psycho-fluff. Newly wed Peter and Angela are on the road and having a bad day, due to her long string of old boyfriends and his lingering jealousy. But running into Jack will turn this into the Honeymoon from Hell. Jack Wareing grabs the title role by the balls as a Mojave Desert madman who (after bashing in a prostitute's skull) makes this a threesome. Angela soon falls into Jack's brawny arms, but when Peter hears the bed-springs creaking (and he's not there to enjoy it), a shit-storm busts loose. The story doesn't swerve much from expectations, but Wareing is one sick badass, with a craggy menace that echoes old school villains like William Smith. Of course, I liked Jack more than the couple, because after 10 minutes of their whining, I wanted to cram their heads into a Cuisinart. It's fun watching Jack manipulate these idiots, until he (unfortunately) goes all goofy at the end. In a sidenote, heterosexual guys must be an endangered species in the Southwest, since every woman instantly spreads her legs at the sight of Jack...I loved Shusuke Kaneko's recent **GAMERA** movies, so I was curious about his sci-fi outing **CROSS FIRE** [a.k.a. **Pyrokinesis**] (2000). Akiko Yada stars as Junko, who's kept a secret since childhood — when her emotions get overheated, fires

spontaneously burst around her. This condition has turned her into a repressed (albeit cute) nervous wreck who's afraid to engage in volatile relationships or conflicts. But just as her life starts to look up, a new friend is brutally murdered by thugs and Junko finds a vengeful use for her powers. Meanwhile, a pair of cops suspect pyrokinesis — since one of them has first-hand experience of its destructive force. The story takes an unexpected turn when Junko is approached by a guy with equally-impressive extra sensory powers; and as more crime-fighting "Espys" enter the picture, it begins to feel like some X-MEN knock-off. But this tale is more complex (and convoluted), since we're never sure where the greatest evil dwells. The fire-and-heat FX are damned impressive, from Junko melting down human dirtbags, to a flaming amusement park finale. Like all of Kaneko's movies, it's slick, fast-paced and served up with a straight face, no matter how idiotic it gets...Recently released on video/DVD, **HOT SUMMER** [Heisser Sommer] (First Run; 1968) proves that East Germany used to make teen-musical exploitation flicks that were just as vapid as American drive-in fare. The threadbare storyline follows 10 boys and 11 girls on summer vacation, and their widescreen misadventures on the Baltic Sea. Sure, they get to frolic on a beach and have romantic campfires, but Frankie & Annette never stayed on a farm collective or danced amongst sheep! Of course, the gals play hard to get, the guys play licks on them, a couple horny dudes fight over a blond babe, and they get into trouble for "borrowing" a boat. This ain't Salinger material, but the hilariously-choreographed musical numbers have a Scopitone quality, as the kids boogie in the sand, sing onboard a moving train, romp in haystacks, and act like total jackasses. Its stars, Chris Doerk (as pretty Stupsi) and Frank Schöbel (as studly Kai), were popular East German "Schlager" singers during the '60s, while cinematographer-turned-director Joachim Hasler (who shot **FIRST SPACESHIP ON VENUS**) keeps this Commie fluff goofy, colorful and best enjoyed in brief, easy-to-digest chunks...Julian P. Hobbs' feature-documentary **COLLECTORS** (2000) focuses on serial killer artwork and two of its biggest (most irritating) patrons.

**THE FOUL KING** (Video Junkie; 2000). It's not often you come across a Korean-lensed, wrestling action-comedy that's part-ROCKY, part-REVENGE OF THE NERDS and part-WWF, but that's exactly what director Kim Ji-Woon offers up in this genial little tale. Song Kang Ho stars as nebbish blank clerk Im Dae-Ho, who can't seem to get a break; his dickhead boss brutalizes him in the mens' room, he's chased by neighborhood thugs and the dweeb has a secret crush on a pretty fellow employee. Looking for a way to turn his life around, Im follows his lifelong passion of no-holds-barred, low-rent wrestling — even though this wimp can barely hold up his own head. Im gets a fluke chance at wrestling stardom when a local coach desperately needs a new cheating-themed star, and he's the only available candidate. Dubbed "The Foul King," Im is trained to use every dirty trick in the book, from nasty holds to delightfully illegal weapons, and during his first match, gets to unload all of his long-pent-up anger. Best of all, when he takes a lork to his opponent's skull and blood spurts across the ring, the crowd goes lucky wild! Empowered by his wrestling mask, Im is soon beating the crap out of street criminals, declaring long hidden desires, and finding inner strength (and nastiness), as it culminates in a big tag-team match against champion opponents. Despite some ill-advised moments, Song's

Meat mortician-turned-collector Rick Staton and serial-killer-board-game creator Tobias Allen, who claim their obsession isn't for morbid thrills, even as Hobbs exposes these boneheads as "ghouls" who make a living off of jailed scum, and are less interested in discovering true 'art' than having a personal connection to these crimes. Even worse, 95% of the artwork sucks. The pair discuss their first attraction to John Wayne Gacy's paintings and how Rick became his agent (and isn't at all creeped out when Gacy paints a portrait of Rick's young son), as well as Richard "The Night Stalker" Ramirez (who doodles mutilated bodies), cannibal Nicolas Claux and torturer-murderer Elmer Wayne Henley Jr. Opinions are also offered by humorless victims' rights advocates and artist Joe Coleman. The movie quickly runs out of steam, but that's not the filmmakers' fault; it's because these guys are superficial fanboys who get off on mass murder and call a vacation to Sharon Tate's bungalow "the thrill of my life." No surprise, there isn't a girlfriend or wife in sight...Despite limited screenings in the US, Kirji Fukasaku's **BATTLE ROYALE** [Crimson Cult Video; 2000] has gotten a lot of mainstream press, thanks to its cast of teen murderers. A busload of boys and girls discover that their junior high class trip is actually taking them to be participants in a deadly game of Battle Royale. They're transported to a deserted island, each is given a different weapon, and in three days, they have to slaughter each



other. 42 children go in and only one leaves "Beat" Takeshi plays their adult host, who prepares the class for their adventure (and assassinates anyone who whispers during his intro). Despite an initial reluctance to kill, that changes once the bullets, arrows and knives begin to fly, and it's a blast watching these school-uniformed kids turn into roving psychopaths. It quickly reaches absurd levels of mayhem, and while this is powerful stuff, it's far from perfect.

The story breaks its stride with too many melodramatic subplots, the introduction of hackers, plus a soft-centered finale. Masanobu Ando stands out as a manic kid who volunteered for the game (since it sounded like fun!), while the other characters tend to blend together. A fascinating movie, but less riveting than I'd hoped.



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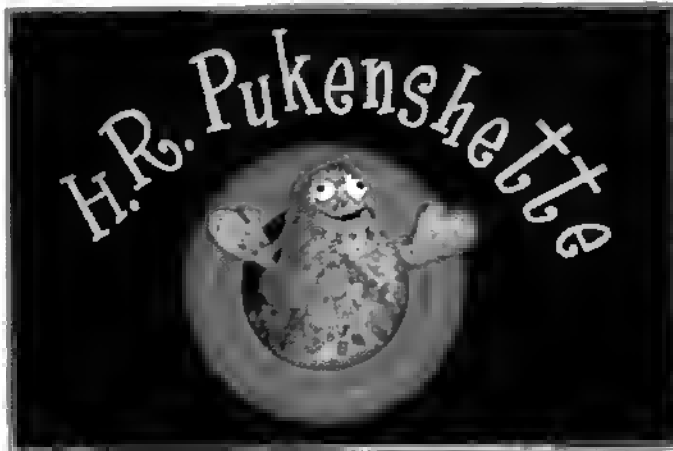
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## UNDER

## GROUND

## ODDITIES

**H.R. PUKENSHETTE (2000)** [Joint Partners Filmworks, 1906 Wall Church, Suite 10, Wall, NJ 07719; [www.jointfilms.com](http://www.jointfilms.com)]. Only 10-minutes long and blissfully inspired, this hilariously foul flick mixes romance, depression, liquor, and Sid & Marty Krofft. When our Dude (Joe McClean) is mercilessly dumped by his sexy-bitch girlfriend (Sabrina Gennarino, who kindly catalogs all of his faults before leaving), he resorts to the only reasonable response — drinking himself to death! Surrounded by empty liquor bottles, the Dude finally vomits and a little creature rises from the chunky puddle. It's H.R. Pukenshette, a living lump of puke that looks like something you'd scrape off of a McDonald's Land toilet bowl! This self-proclaimed "guardian angel" (complete with an outlandish French accent, voiced by Kevin Kolack), promises to show him that life is worth living after all. Cut to: The pair romping about a park, sharing a playground's seesaw and hitting on women, as our Dude finally understands that you don't need a hot gal in your bed if you've got a bunch of cheap puppet pals (dubbed "fucked-uppels") instead! Of course, there's a toe-tapping tune as the two gallivant about town ("It's a sunny day, and we're outdoors. / Let's drink some beers, and get some whores."). Writer-director Steve Herold takes this wonderfully warped concept to its extremes, wrings out maximum laughs, and doesn't let it oversay its welcome. The jokes may be cheap and crude, but they actually work, while McClean gleefully embraces his fetid new friend. Recovering from a broken heart has never been so surreal or repulsive.



**MOTION (2001)** [Pull Back Camera Ltd; [www.pullbackcamera.com](http://www.pullbackcamera.com)]. Running on a budget of only £3,000, director-photographer Tom Clay has created a sobering digital-glimpse of life on the streets, which often feels like an Alan Clarke film for the 21st century. In Brighton, England, Don (D.A. Robinson) spends his days sitting in doorways, panhandling spare change. Homeless and a bit slow-witted, Don loses track of his longtime friend (Miguel Angel Plaza) when he goes off to buy some cigs, and suddenly he's alone, lost and wandering without any destination. Shop owners toss him out, delinquents kick the shit out of him, and even when something positive occurs (an old acquaintance buys him a pint), it turns to shit (the guy then attempts to molest him in the bathroom). We've all experienced bad nights, but they're nothing compared to this grim, fragmented, 62-minute vision. Its final quarter takes a radical turn as Don realizes that society has literally frozen in place, leading to a bizarre lime twist that left me wondering what point Clay was trying to make. Nevertheless, Robinson gives an intense, authentic performance as weather-beaten Don, while Clay captures the depths of his confusion and frustration, right down to the type of hunger that would allow you to eat a sandwich that's been dropped onto the sidewalk. Although its conclusion left me a little disappointed, few big-budget studio films are as technically impressive or emotionally involving. Bravo!

**I LOVE SUSIE (2001)** [Dave Neabore, 527 Cleveland Ave, River Vale, NJ 07675]. This review will be brief, just like the movie. Set in Tokyo (yet shot in Brooklyn and Manhattan), this 9-minute comedy of sexual frustration will undoubtedly appeal most to cinephiles who've sat through far too much Japanese erotica. James Villeneuve plays Jim Wilson, a New Yorker on his first visit to Japan. Once settled in at his hotel, he decides to relax with a little local TV, only to discover that their 'adult films' channel covers up all of the *really* naughty bits with an annoying white dot. After a call to the desk clerk (Keong Sim), Jim sadly learns that on-screen genitalia is verboten in Japan, so this sexually-frustrated American finally requests a prostitute. Enter sexy Susie (Vanessa Reeder) and even more problems. Writer-director Dave Neabore's silly, one-joke premise is a bit predictable, and almost felt like a vignette from an Asian LOVE AMERICAN STYLE, while my absolute favorite moments were its gorgeously psychedelic (and laughably gratuitous) segues!

**ANNABEL LEE (2001)** [[www.poeupuppet.com](http://www.poeupuppet.com)]. Edgar Allan Poe's classic poem has been transformed into an ambitious and lovably morbid stop-motion/puppet mini-epic that feels like Sam Raimi meets Ladislav Starewicz. Directed and designed by George Higham, this brooding 20-minute film packs a visual punch into every frame. As animated rats scurry across weathered ground, skulls stare from every wall and a tombstone wilts, our 'Puppet Poe' wanders a grotesque dream-landscape, mourning the loss of his lovely Annabel Lee. The 'seraphs of heaven' are particularly twisted, as is the Angel of Death, who stole Annabel from 'Puppet Poe,' while a flashback to their once-sunny romance decays on-screen in spectacular fashion. On the down side, Jim Knipfelf's narration gets a bit heavyhanded, while the two primary characters are frustratingly inexpressive — in fact, Annabel has as much eerie charm as a remodeled Barbie. Still, there's no denying the power of its meticulously constructed, outrageously perverse backdrops. ANNABEL LEE takes Poe's beloved ode to love, death and horror to surreal new visual heights.

**CONVERSATION FOR A DOLLAR (2000)** [Ill Character Productions, P.O. Box 15456, Boston, MA 02215; [www.illcharacters.com](http://www.illcharacters.com)]. A young guy sets up a folding table and chair outdoors, then hangs a hand-written sign advertising "Conversation: \$1", in this surprisingly engaging 36-minute film from writer-director-star Jason Fisher. The concept of selling this b&w flick might sound simple, but as a variety of oddball customers (including a priest, a cop, a widow, and even a robot) spend a buck for this "street performer's" service, this dialogue-driven movie turns into the MY DINNERS WITH ANDRE of the underground film scene. A wide range of topics are discussed, including comic book superheroes, the shape of universe, The Thundercats, and the nature of sanity (with a guy in a straight jacket). Of course, a talk about the meaning of life first needs a 2-foot-tall bong with some "chronic-ass weed." A few episodes are downright silly (like fighting a Ninja), but it quickly sucks you back in with a discourse on the nature of mathematics, while occasionally segueing to vignettes, diagrams and images that help convey the more complex (or ridiculous) ideas. This smart and funny short film won me over in its first minutes, and Fisher is fantastic in this stoned role, as he nimbly adapts to any question — philosophical, emotional, scientific, cosmic, or just idiotic, such as when a pimp asks who had more space-ho's, Han Solo or Captain Kirk? It's a welcome, well-written exception to the inane trajectory of most home-lensed productions.

**LEAVING GRUNION COUNTY (2001)** [Pickled Creek Productions, P.O. Box 4983, Winter Park, FL 32793]. I've got to give writer-director Richard Christy credit for perseverance. I thoroughly trashed his previous project, T-BACK: THE BARE-ASSED CARNAL KNIGHT, yet he still sent me his newest feature. And wouldn't you know, it's a vast improvement over his first! Mind you, I'm not saying it's *good* — this is an inept, disjointed, overlong, embellished home movie, but at least the photography stays in focus this time around. The gags hit as much as they miss, and it's definitely unpredictable. Steve Childer stars as Tilt McGillis, a hick shitkicker who — despite having a brain the size of a Raisinette — dreams of being a country music star. After tooling around Grunion County, pulling vicious practical jokes and hanging out with his barely-sentient, chicken-fucking buds, Tilt runs into a music producer whose car has broken down. He instantly loves Tilt's atrocious music, signs the guy to a contract, and takes Tilt (along with his suitcase full of beer bottles and porn mags) on his first ever trip to the big city. Tilt makes Jethro Bodine look like Rene Descartes, and his misadventures are mind-numbing (and what's with his homo-superhero hallucinations?). Awash in frighteningly authentic white trash cars, homes, fashions and dialogue, this crude tale of redneck dreams is continually on the verge of falling to pieces, but gets a lot of mileage from its goofy enthusiasm and anything-for-a-dumb-joke desperation. It's idiotic but strangely fascinating.

**STIFFED (2000)** [[www.stiffed2001.com](http://www.stiffed2001.com)]. This 26-minute black comedy works with the premise "If the dead could speak...What would they say?" In this instance, our subject is the recently deceased Arnold Mortimer (Peter Griffith), who awaits his funeral and whines about how annoying the afterlife is. I'd feel the same way, after watching flashbacks involving his insensitive funeral parlor wankers (Lee Stille and Justin Labond), who wisecrack as they prepare Arnold's body for burial — cleaning, sealing, bloodletting, embalming, and dressing. Sure, the details of the behind-the-scenes funeral biz are uncommonly cruel, but writer-director Gordon Castelnoro always goes for the cheapest possible joke. Arnold's kicked-the-bucket commentary is painfully obvious, as is the occasional visual gag, and when he worries that one of the prissy embalmers is going to molest him, in comes the OELIVERANCE banjo music. While these queer-quips would probably piss off thin-skinned P.C. viewers, STIFFED is so insufferably lame that few will ever have an opportunity to see it. Try to imagine Nacho Cerdá's AFTERMATH crossed with a soft-centered, 6th-rate Zucker Brothers. The production looks good, but the actors are unrestrained, and none of it is either shocking or funny. Plus, we have to look at this naked, love-handled dead guy for most of the movie. In the end, this offers little optimism for the funeral industry or the future of underground comedies.

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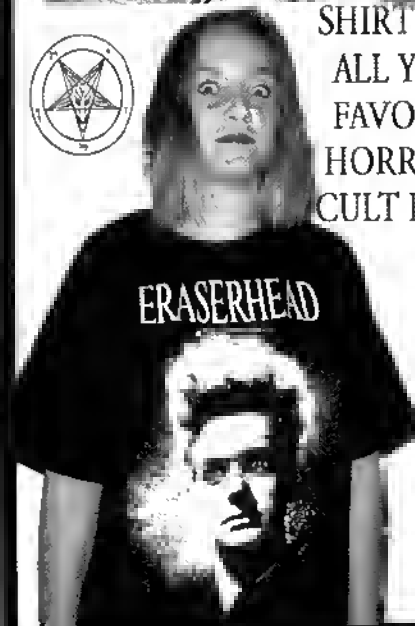
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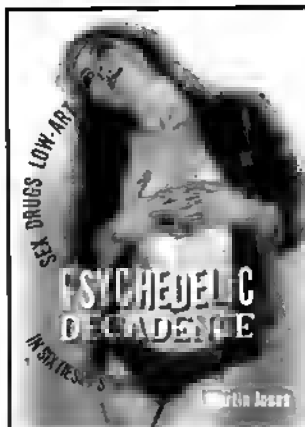


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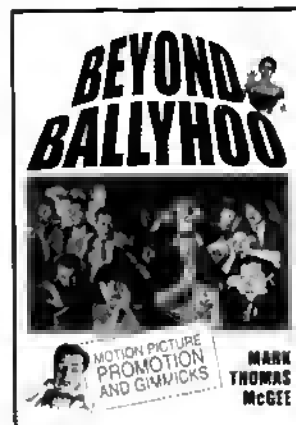


# Shocking Books

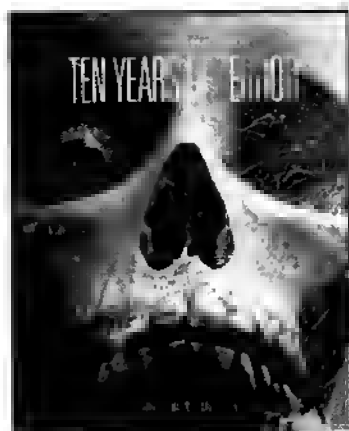
**PSYCHEDELIC DECADENCE: SEX DRUGS LOW-ART IN SIXTIES & SEVENTIES BRITAIN** by Martin Jones (Headpress/Critical Vision; [www.headpress.com](http://www.headpress.com); \$19.95). There are few things in life groovier than British culture of the late-'60s and early-'70s, and this fabulous new book revels in some of the best and most eccentric aspects of that wild era. Jones' collection of wonderfully entertaining essays cover a wide range of subject matter, including movies, music, books, celebrities, magazines, and much more. We get Peter Cook, Roxy Music, early David Bowie, J.G. Ballard, the brief career of director Michael Reeves, UK biker fare (from trashy novels to the undead-cycle gem *PSYCHOMANIA*), and trendy flicks like *DRACULA A.D.* 1972 and *PERFORMANCE*. While many of these topics will be familiar to US readers (such as the timeless allure of Emma Peel), its more interesting chapters center on items less available on this side of the Atlantic, such as the smutty *CONFESSIONS OF A...* exploitation franchise and the hilariously hedonistic 'Mens Mag' *Mayfair* (including profiles of some of their naughtiest models). Jones knows his offbeat media, and this 176-page winner will leave you happily nostalgic for these tripped-out times; long gone but not forgotten.



**BEYOND BALLYHOO: MOTION PICTURE PROMOTION AND GIMMICKS** by Mark Thomas McGee (McFarland & Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; 1-800-253-2187; \$29 postpaid). Hollywood has never shied away from suckering in audiences with outlandish gimmicks, and this 237-page softcover hits all of the bases, from cinema's early days to the heights of exploitation. Of course, the greatest hype-meister of all time, William Castle, gets his share of praise (thanks to half-baked ideas like *Emergo*, *Percepto* and *Illusion-O*), while a lengthy history of 3-D takes us through the first whiff of a cash cow in *BWANA DEVIL*, Tinseltown's leap onto this short-lived bandwagon, and 3-D's resurgence in flicks like *ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN*. In addition to one-shot giveaways (such as Up-Chuck Cups) and transcriptions of radio spots, there's even a glossary to all of their silly, invented terms, such as *WICKED WICKED's* 'Duo-Vision', Ray Harryhausen's 'Dynamation' and the rumble-inducing 'Sensurround'. But McGee doesn't simply dote on kitschy ideas. Chapters are also devoted to technical innovations — from the early days of sound and color, to Cinerama, CinemaScope and its various anamorphic knock-offs. While *BALLYHOO* never delves too deep, it packs a lot of amusing info between its covers, as well as numerous photos and silly ad slicks from these anything-to-sell-a-ticket outings.



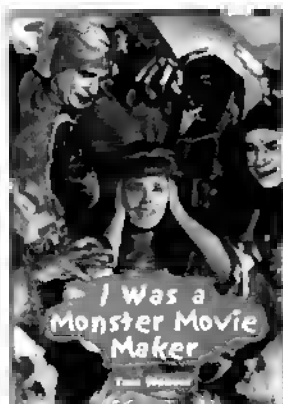
**TEN YEARS OF TERROR: BRITISH HORROR FILMS OF THE 1970s** edited by Harvey Fenton and David Flint (FAB Press; [www.fabpress.com](http://www.fabpress.com); \$39.95). During the last few years, FAB Press has published some of the most beautifully designed and coolest-themed film books around, and they continue that tradition with this amazing 336-page, over-sized softcover (also available in hardback). Fenton and Flint — in addition to a long list of excellent contributors — have certainly done their research on this groundbreaking decade for British horror. Tackling



everything from monsters and madmen, to vampires and vixens, it encompasses the classics we already know and love (*THE WICKER MAN*, *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*), as well as arthouse weirdness (*THE SHOUT*). Hammer exploitation, and loads of 100% trash (*QUEEN KONG*). In addition to lengthy reviews of each movie, we're given detailed credits. Trivia, old ad slicks, and (often lovably lurid) photos. In addition, there are appendices aimed at short films and experimental works, television series and borderline flicks that didn't make the cut, plus 48 pages of color graphics. More than just an incredible reference book, this will open your eyes to tons of obscure flicks that you'll desperately want to check out for yourself.

**THE SATANIC SCREEN: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE DEVIL IN FILM** by Nikolas Schreck (Creation Books; [www.creationbooks.com](http://www.creationbooks.com); \$19.95). Satan has plenty of charisma, works cheap, can adapt to any scenario, and has a proven box-office draw. So it's no surprise that filmmakers continually make him a prominent character in their storylines. Nikolas Schreck (best known for his 1989 video *CHARLES MANSON SUPERSTAR*) has compiled these Satanic shenanigans into a damned impressive book, which traces Beelzebub's cinematic reign from the silent era through the present day. Beginning with Georges Méliès' early concepts of the devil and the mind-boggling *HAXAN*, through Lucifer's more-modern incarnations in *BEDAZZLED* and *ROSEMARY'S BABY*, Schreck focuses on every Satanic subplot — from mainstream studio fare to purely exploitative drive-in slop. Where else will you find *THE EXORCIST* next door to the porn-classic *THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES*? Schreck is obviously well-versed in this territory, and while his prose can get a bit verbose, the guy packs in a jaw-dropping amount of cool information and photos. Bouncing from one devilishly entertaining title to the next, it's everything you'd ever want to know about Old Nick's on-screen antics.

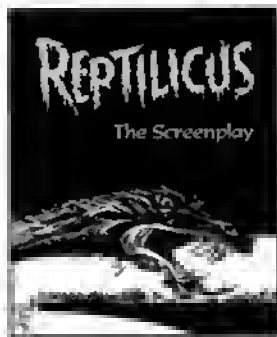
**JACQUES TOURNEUR: THE CINEMA OF NIGHTFALL** by Chris Fujiwara (Johns Hopkins University Press; [www.jhupbooks.com](http://www.jhupbooks.com); \$18.95). Director Jacques Tourneur is best known for horror classics such as *CAT PEOPLE* and *NIGHT OF THE DEMON*, but most of his career has been woefully neglected. This insightful, 344-page softcover attempts to set the record straight, by offering an intelligent, deftly-researched analysis of his diverse cinematic legacy. Of course, author Fujiwara devotes in-depth chapters to Tourneur's highest-profile titles, like *RKO's* creepy *I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE* and the noir-gem *OUT OF THE PAST*, but even more interesting are the portions focusing on his most obscure efforts (A female pirate movie? A sword and sandal epic starring Steve Reeves?) and neglected masterpieces (the 1946 western *CANYON PASSAGE*). There's also info on the films made by his father Maurice, descriptions of Jacques' early French features and MGM shorts, forgettable AIP fare that ended his career (then again, I'm a fan of his *THE COMEDY OF TERRORS*), and even television projects. Comments by Tourneur, as well as recollections from those who worked with him, are sprinkled throughout, while Fujiwara's astute critical eye uncovers the depth and thematic connections within his movies. Including a brief introduction by Martin Scorsese, this is a wise, well-written and invaluable addition to any film scholar's library.



**I WAS A MONSTER MOVIE MAKER** by Tom Weaver (McFarland & Company, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; 1-800-253-2187; \$42.50 postpaid). There's no argument that Tom Weaver is an excellent writer and interviewer, and his McFarland books never disappoint. For this new, 320-page hardcover, he dredges up a wide array of B-movie character actors, sci-fi/horror regulars, once-upon-a-time starlets, and assorted low-end filmmakers, and convinces them to open up about their career highs, as well as the lows (which usually account for the most entertaining stories). Amongst its 22 interviews, the more recognizable names include Faith Domergue, Dana Wynter, Phyllis Kirk, Suzanna Leigh, Norman Lloyd, and the ever-pneumatic June Wilkinson. Of course, few of these names will be immediately recognizable to mainstream movie fans (hey, even I didn't know a few of them), but *SHOCK CINEMA* regulars will be in genre-flick heaven. Where else will you find Shirley Ulmer discussing the career of longtime hubby Edgar G., or *CARNIVAL OF SOULS* starlet Candace Hilligoss discussing her movie's frighteningly-awful remake? Filled with informative and funny anecdotes, this is a blast for film fanatics.



**FLESHPOT: CINEMA'S SEXUAL MYTH MAKERS & TABOO BREAKERS** edited by Jack Stevenson (Headpress/Critical Vision; www.headpress.com; \$19.95). The weird world of erotic cinema is lovingly embraced in this 256-page softcover from longtime sleaze historian Jack Stevenson, who approaches the most obscure niches of the exploitation genre with a clear and intelligent eye. Subjects range from raunch icons Linda Lovelace and Russ Meyer, to more eccentric folks such as Udo Kier and 'taboo' filmmaker John Lindsay. No question, the most engaging chapters are penned by Stevenson himself — from sex education shorts and early stag films, to the history of US gay sex flicks (including taves such as *THE MEATRACK* and *THUNDERCRACK!*) — while Kenneth Anger provides a fascinating profile of French temptress Vivienne Romance. Several of the contributors' essays are a bit leaden (e.g. European experimental erotica, cinematic origins of 'the vamp'), but it's easy to forgive the occasional pothole as we explore the seediest side streets of sexy celluloid. Great fun for the deviant inside each of us.



**REPTILICUS: THE SCREENPLAY** edited by Kip Doto (P.O. Box 8050, Coral Springs, FL 33075). Yes, you read it correctly. It's an entire softcover volume devoted to this hysterically-awful Danish monsterama! For anyone unfamiliar with the flick, when oil workers unearth a frozen, prehistoric tail, it defrosts and regenerates its gigantic old body. The result? A rubbery puppet that hangs limp from wires, smashes doll houses in slow motion and spits green acid. The book's centerpiece is the 96-page shooting script by Ib Melchior, and while I doubt I'll be kicking back and reading the screenplay anytime soon (OK...never), the extras are what makes it so cool. Kip Doto has dug up every scrap of info on the making of this anti-epic, including details about the different versions of the movie — one filmed specifically for Danish theatres, director Sid Pink's original cut, and AIP's last-minute hackjob. There are also tons of merchandising materials such as pressbooks, colorful posters, photos, comic book tie-ins, Danish promo items, and even song lyrics! It's more than you'd ever need (or want) to know about REPTILICUS. Amazing!

## GOON GOROON Continued from PAGE 22

movie called *THE LOLLIPOP COVER*, which appears to be long lost.

Gordon: I wrote it with Everett Chambers, who produced and directed it, and I starred in it. We did the movie for something like \$65,000 and we sold it for a pretty good sum. I bought a house with the money. It was a story about a guy whose money is stolen. He's a very bad prizefighter. He wins a fight, and the manager runs off with his money. So he starts hitchhiking from San Francisco to L.A. and on the way, he bumps

into a little child, who keeps tagging along with him. It's their story. Actually, I've got the only 35mm print of the film. I gave it to my daughter. They were going to throw it away.

**SC: You've always seemed like an unselfish actor, someone who always gives a great performance no matter what the role, someone who always makes the actors you're supporting look great.**

Gordon: Well, look. The better the other actor is, the better I am. So, why be selfish? Why try and hog

everything? Acting isn't, but it should be, a kind of communal life. With some actors I've known, it's "Me, me me, I, I, I. Where's my close-up?" And I always figured, "Let's just all be good." It all starts with the script anyway. Let's hope for a good script. Work hard at it, and the directors and the editors, they'll take care of the rest. I just do the best job I can, and I want to work with the best actors I can. If you're working with me, and you're a good actor, I'm going to be good. If you're a bad actor, I may still be good, but not as good as I could be. ☺

## JARED MARTIN Continued from PAGE 27

to put a show together. I liked the show. I was the star; I liked the feeling of having my own television show. I liked the concept. There were some philosophical ramifications to that idea of aliens living amongst us that were picked up by — amongst others — *THE X-FILES*. There was a lot of good work done up there in Toronto. Unfortunately, most of it was done in the winter at 5 o'clock in the morning, and it was freezing, wet and cold. I fell in love, I fell out of love. I left a lot of my life there. And when I came back to Hollywood, something in me — very small at the time, but soon to grow large — realized that I kind of wanted to stop. I wanted to go out — it not on top, then with a good feeling. I didn't want to hang around Hollywood anymore. I didn't want to go back on the ladder and go out on interviews. Worry about my bald spot, worry about being nice to hateful people. I wanted to spend some time writing and looking at myself. And I did. I took a year off, and after that it was very hard to go back. A couple of years later, I wound up in Philadelphia as the Creative Director of the Big Picture Alliance, actually adding to the world, instead of adding to a dusty shelf of outworn tapes.

**SC: And what is Big Picture Alliance?**

Martin: We teach filmmaking skills to inner-city youth, and migrant youth. Youth being teenagers. We actually make movies: we teach them to write, to act, to run cameras and lights and sound. Then we bring them in after the movie is shot and do editing, sound design, and music. We've actually shot 50 films in the last five years. Some of them have won awards. We've grown from nothing to a \$500,000 a year budget. We've touched 400 or 500 kids...It's very satisfying work in a way I never would've thought possible. And it's allowed me to explore some of my own creative ideas.

**SC: Any comments on your last film to date, *TWIN SITTERS*, which was a vehicle for the Barbarian Brothers?**

Martin: *TWIN SITTERS* was directed by John Paragon, who was a very funny comedian. He worked with the Groundlings, and I always used to laugh when I saw him in the '80s. Audacious. The Barbarian Brothers? I don't have too much to say — I could never tell them apart, excepting one was smaller than the other. The smaller one seemed to be nicer and the other one had his foot on the gas a little bit too much

for my taste. That was the last film I ever did. I remember having a scene with George Lazenby (who had played James Bond in one film), and I looked at him and thought, "I'm going to wind up like George Lazenby." Which may not be a bad way to wind up; he seemed like a nice guy and he was having a good time and getting a pay day. I just didn't want to be an asterisk in show business. I wanted to go back to feeling special, even if it was in a smaller arena. Unless you're at the very top of Hollywood, it's hard to feel special. You're always supporting another pair of feet on your shoulders. I remember standing there, looking at George going through the scene, both of us saying our lines — then the director saying, "Okay!" because he was under a vicious time schedule and we had to get the shot done, so we weren't really investigating our material or working on it — and I said, "This is it." And that was the last scene I ever did.

**SC: If you were ever offered a decent role, would you act again?**

Martin: Sure. I'd be a fool to say no. But nobody knows where I am to offer me one. I've taken care of that temptation. ☺

## LORENZO SEMPLE, Jr. Cont. from PAGE 37

Turman had just done *THE GRADUATE*. Joe Levine at Embassy had the idea of hiring young kids that you could get very cheap to make youth oriented films. Noel Black found the book. It was called "*She Let Him Continue*", a wonderful little. Larry got together with Noel, he was the perfect young director to do this thing. I knew Larry and ran into him. I had read the book. And we couldn't get any money from Fox, I think we wanted \$17,000 to write the screenplay and they said no, they couldn't afford it. I said I'll write the script on spec and we'd split all monies from it, which is what I did. I wrote the script on spec. It was very hard to cast. Tuesday was excellent for it but Tony was much too obvious for it. We really tried to find somebody young to do it. We never could find a new, young actor the studio would go with.

**SC: It's been said the studio didn't know what to do with the film.**

Semple: That's right. A couple of previews in Westwood were truly horrible. People walked out. The Robert Kennedy assassination may have had an

effect, you always look for excuses for movies noody goes to. But they really didn't go to the film. The critical acclaim the film got, Pauline Kael was responsible. Fox opened it without critics screenings, which they do with very bad pictures. They felt it was a total disaster. They opened it on 42nd Street on some semi-porn theater. Pauline and Joe Morgenstern (movie critic for *The Wall Street Journal*) said, "Let's go see this one. What movie is so terrible Fox won't let us see it?" Kael decided to beat the studio over the head with it by saying, "This great classic, this wonderful movie..." She seriously over-praised it.

**SC: What do you remember about working with Dino De Laurentiis on the remake of *KING KONG*?**

Semple: I loved it. It was wonderful. I undoubtedly destroyed my career a great deal by working for him, but it was irresistible. He was totally individual. He called me up, "What do you think we do *KING KONG*? We use the World Trade Center, no?" And that was all.

**SC: Obviously the film was updated and modernized, but why did he change Kong's final scene**

**from the Empire State Building to the World Trade Center?**

Semple: Taller building! It would of been better with the original. But it does show that remaking a classic is absolutely doomed. It was an homage to the original film. Unfortunately, the effects never worked properly. We had a big mechanical ape that never worked. We had one hand that worked! But it's an amusing movie. It's not a great movie but it's by no means a bad movie. It's an enjoyable adventure. It's the only thing I've ever done that was unfairly treated. Also there was too much hype before it came out.

**SC: I remember Dino hyped up the budget a lot.**

Semple: He grossly exaggerated the cost. These days when people say a movie cost \$120 million, (the filmmakers) say no, it only cost \$70. Dino tripled the cost of everything! I don't know what it cost but believe me, it was done as cheaply as possible. I loved working with Dino, he was adorable. Dino also did that movie *ORCA* that I did some work on, without credit. He said, "We make a shark like her!" I always regretted Bo Derek having her leg bitten off! ☺

## MAGS, ZINES &amp; SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

**ALTERNATIVE CINEMA #18** (P.O. Box 371, Glenwood, NJ 07418; \$20 for 4 issues). Focusing on indie film & video, this 56-page issue includes solid essays on Ken Russell and *Sleepy Hollow*, a Q&A with Fred Olen Ray, wonderfully caustic video reviews, plus 16 pages of ads touting their own video releases.

**ASIAN CULT CINEMA #31-32** (P.O. Box 16-1919, Miami, FL 33116; \$6 each, or 6 issues for \$30). A slick, essential digest devoted to Asian filmmaking. The latest issues contain cool articles on Japanese Fighting Divas, a Bollywood Who's Who, Asian news and reviews, plus interviews with Maggie Cheung & Stephen Chow. Always fascinating and informative!

**ASKEW REVIEWS #8** (Denis Sheehan, P.O. Box 684, Hanover, MA 02339; \$2). A 32-page, text-heavy zine that overflows with reviews of odd new video and music releases, and even some personal ramblings. Check them out at: [www.askewreviews.com](http://www.askewreviews.com).

**BADAZZ MOFO #6** (P.O. Box 40649, Portland, OR 97240; \$5). David Walker returns with another must-have issue. They just keep getting better, and this one is packed with interviews (Glynn Turman, Antonio Fargas), cool articles (a tribute to Fal Albert, and a hilarious Best-and-Worst Film Awards) and tons of blaxploitation reviews. Highly recommended!

**BRUTARIAN #32-33** (P.O. Box 210, Accokeek, MD 20607; \$16 for 4 issues). A fun mag crammed with music & book reviews, cool observations, cheap jokes, and the amusing 'Six Pack Theater' video column. #33 includes an excellent article on Indonesian horror.

**CARBON 14 #19** (P.O. Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; \$20 for 4 issues). This thick, alternative music magazine is always filled with interviews (usually with bands I've never heard of), artist profiles, reviews, and pop culture craziness, as well as the ever-cool ramblings of longtime film-freak Dan "Danté" Taylor.

**CHILLER THEATRE #14** (P.O. Box 23, Rutherford, NJ 07070; \$23 for 4 issues). This glossy, beautifully

produced mag is always a treat, and the latest includes terrific interviews with David Hedison, Richard Lynch, Don Stroud, Tura Salana, and many more. Another excellent edition from Kevin Clement and his talented group of contributors!

**CINEMAD #5** (Mike Planie, P.O. Box 43909, Tucson, AZ 85733; 4 issues for \$12). Hol off the presses, the latest dose of this cool, 56-page film mag contains interviews with the amazing R. Lee Ermy, plus directors Susuki Sejun and James Fotopoulos, as well as film fest coverage, reviews and more! Recommended!

**FEMINIST BASEBALL #16** (Jeff Smith, P.O. Box 9609, Seattle, WA 98109; \$3). A 'type, cut and paste' zine with 80-pages of weird articles, music and movie reviews, plus an ultra-brief Q&A with your SC-editor (conducted so long ago that I've now located most of the 'lost' films that I mentioned). Crude fun that looks like it was pasted-up while on a Jagermeister binge.

**FILM GEEK #5** (P.O. Box 501113, Tulsa, OK 74150; \$1 ppd). Expanding to 28-pages, this old school Xerox-digest reviews loads of cult laves — from B-movie madness to punk licks — as well as zines and books. It's fueled by no-nonsense opinions and a good sense of humor, plus it's only a buck!

**HEADPRESS 21** (40 Rossall Avenue, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JD, Great Britain). David Kerekes' awesome 176-page "journal of sex religion death" offers a barrage of mind-altering articles — from kinky Nazi leishies to interviews with Mary Woronov, Buddy Giovinazzo and porn-auteur Jim Powers. Incredible! Check out [www.headpress.com](http://www.headpress.com).

**METASEX #3** (P.O. Box 620, Old Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10011; \$10 w/checks made out to Michelle Clifford). The latest dose of this 64-page zine is packed with well-researched articles devoted to the extreme niches of the sex scene. Topics include '70s bisexual loops, kinky French sexploitation, classic gay porn, sex documentaries, plus old school Times Square deviance. Bizarre and informative!

**SEX AND GUTS #3** (Gene Gregoritis, P.O. Box 924, Glendale, CA 91204; \$10 ppd). Edited by Gregoritis and Lydia Lunch, this incredible 70-page alternative-film mag is packed with cool articles & lengthy interviews, including Chas. Balun, Jack Ketchum, Buddy Giovinazzo, Rockets Redglare, Richard Stanley, plus lots of acid-logged reviews. Highly recommended!

**SLEAZOID EXPRESS / Summer 2000** (P.O. Box 620, Old Chelsea Station, NY, NY 10011; \$10 w/checks made out to Bill Landis). The glory daze of 42nd Street return in this kick-ass zine! 74 pages packed with lengthy reviews of old grindhouse laves, from DeSade licks and Jacopetti/Prosperi gems, to memories of first seeing *Saló*. Great stuff!

**SNACKBAR CONFIDENTIAL #38** (P.O. Box 895, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866). This Xerox-zine is a cool hodgepodge of fondly-remembered blais from the past — including long-lost food products, old movie ads, '70s TV-movies, and kitschy newspaper clippings. A little of everything in a 20-page digest!

**ULTRA VIOLENT #3** (P.O. Box 110117, Palm Bay, FL 32911-0117; \$3.95). A 32-page zine devoted to the extremes of horror/exploitation cinema. In addition to video & book reviews, the latest includes brief interviews with Ted V. Mikels, George Romero, Jose Mojica Marins and *Violent Shit*-auteur Andreas Schnaas.

**UNCUT #11** (Midnight Media, P.O. Box 211, Hurlingham, PE29 2WD, England). Focusing on "world-wide video weirdness," this beautiful 60-page UK mag contains tons of insightful reviews (from classic grindhouse oddies to new horror crap), cool graphics, plus an interview with Fred Williamson! Highly recommended! Get it at: [www.midnight-media.demon.co.uk](http://www.midnight-media.demon.co.uk).

**WORLDLY REMAINS #4** (P.O. Box 8008, Universal City, CA 91618; \$18 for 4-issues). This glossy, 56-page "pop culture" magazine is a new lave! In addition to several lengthy video & music reviews, its centerpiece is a 12-page interview with the legendary William Smith! Well-written, slick and extremely entertaining!

## VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

**BLACKEST HEART MEDIA**, P.O. Box 3376, Antioch, CA 94531-3376. Shawn's kick-ass catalog is packed with twisted videos, I-shirts, comics, & CD's, and it's only three stinkin' bucks. Go straight to: [www.blackestheart.com](http://www.blackestheart.com). Recommended!

**BLOODGORE**, P.O. Box 543, Iselin, NJ 08830. Four stamps and an age statement gets you their catalog, filled with imported horror, gore, Mondo movies, and assorted cinematic sleaze.

**CRIMSON CULT VIDEO**, P.O. Box 344, Hamlin, NY 14464. A cool selection of bizarre laves, including overseas oddities, forgotten cult gems and loads of badass horror. They're also at: [www.crimsoncultvideo.com](http://www.crimsoncultvideo.com).

**EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA**, P.O. Box 12161, Spring, TX 77391-2161. Always digging up sexy, violent & artsy gems, Craig's \$3 catalog is crammed with excellent quality overseas oddities. Recommended! ETC is on-line at: [www.dlabolik.demon.co.uk](http://www.dlabolik.demon.co.uk).

**EYE TV / INTRAVENOUS VIDEO**, c/o Tony Pradlik, 14 Fieldstone Dr. #348, Hartsdale, NY 10530. A lovely eclectic catalog, filled with soundtracks, high-art and mind-blowing music oddities. They're online at: <http://members.aol.com/rcknrex/collect/index.htm>.

**JUST FOR THE HELL OF IT**, P.O. Box 19, Dept. SC, Butler, NJ 07405. Only \$3 gets you their incredible catalog (checks made out to Mike Decker) featuring

the best and rarest of the beloved grindhouse & drive-in era! A blast from the past, and highly recommended!

**LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WORKS**, P.O. Box 1047, Dept. SC, Medford, NY 11763. An incredible array of EuroSex epics, spaghetti westerns, arthouse fare, and much more! They also stock a kickass assortment of books and mags. Visit them at: [www.lfvw.com](http://www.lfvw.com).

**SHOCKING VIDEOS**, c/o Mark Johnston, HC-77 Box 111, Hinton, WV 25951. If you're a cult film fanatic, this should be your first stop! A jaw-dropping selection of video oddities from around the world, and \$3 gets you their huge catalog! Highly recommended! Email: [shockingvideos@cltynei.net](mailto:shockingvideos@cltynei.net).

**SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO**, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. It's impossible to beat this mind-boggling array of sexploitation, kitsch shorts, Deuce laves, and more! Mike Vraney is always digging up rare new laves, so go to: [www.somethingweird.com](http://www.somethingweird.com).

**TAPES OF TERROR**, c/o R. Riggs, 11430 Mullins Dr., Dept. SC, Houston, TX 77035-2632. A terrific collection of horror videos, and more! You can visit: [www.morticiasmorgue.com/tot.html](http://www.morticiasmorgue.com/tot.html).

**VIDEO DUNGEON**, P.O. Box 873, Dept. SC, Tarpon Springs, FL 34688. Their \$3 catalog offers up sleazy horror, sexploitation and weirdness from around the globe. Go to: [www.videodungeon.net](http://www.videodungeon.net).

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## DEATH CURSE OF TARTU



## STING OF DEATH

# The Grindhouse Greats of WILLIAM GREFÉ!

### DEATH CURSE OF TARTU • 1967 • color

Those wacky Everglades! They're full of all sorts of wild, scary animals, some of which are even the supernatural manifestations of "evil spirits and witch doctors that turn themselves into giant alligators!" Or snakes. And sharks. Really.

Four archaeology students activate the DEATH CURSE OF TARTU when they start making out and go-go dancing on an ancient Indian burial ground. This so annoys Tartu, a Seminole witch doctor dead some 400 years, that his decomposed corpse comes to life, changes into a variety of animals, and promptly starts killing everyone. But when the students' teacher finds Tartu's resting place and tries to destroy his remains, Tartu climbs out of his casket, turns into his young pie-rotted self, and goes chasing after the leading lady... #7705 \$15

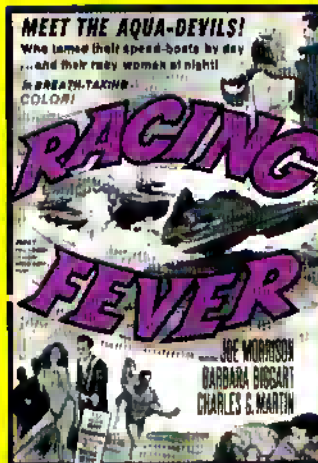
### STING OF DEATH • 1966 • color

Oh, lordy lord... Take a deep breath, get the smelling salts, and strap yourself in 'cause this here is the world's first and only Jellyfish-Man Movie and seeing it still ain't believing it!

A mad marine biologist sneaks off to an underwater lab, transforms himself into a mutant half-man, half-Portuguese man-of-war, and attacks college kids with his STING OF DEATH! Why? 'Cause he's in love! Really. And with his giant bulbous head, the jellyfish man may very well be the single most hilarious-looking movie monster yet committed to film!

An instant kitsch classic, STING OF DEATH contrasts its candy colors, cheerful atmosphere, and insipid characters with a hilariously high body count in which practically everyone in the cast is killed. #7706 \$15

A jellyfish man, homicidal junkies, a priest on acid, and Miss Rita Hayworth getting high! They're all here and part of the wild world of William Grefé, Florida's foremost exploitation film director, whose Drive-In Classics encompassed such popular genres as horror films, racing flicks, and drug movies — often shot in some godawful swamp — while always managing to include a musical moment where sexy gals shake their butts! See: Goofy-Looking Monsters! See: Hippies Gone Bad!! See: The Grindhouse Greats of William Grefé!



### RACING FEVER • 1964 • color

RACING FEVER is a shot-in-Miami, high-octane ode to speed on the high seas among the adrenalin-charged world of speedboat racing, with a healthy dose of gim, downright nasty melodrama thrown in!

Pop Gunner is an aging champion hydroplane racer who's preparing for his last race before handing the reins over to his hunky son, tee. But all racing heroes must have a nemesis, and Pop's is Gregg Stevenson, a rich cad who is not only the current champ, but is also having an extramarital fling with Pop's young, confused daughter, Linda.

Highlighted by authentic racing footage, and held together by its very seedy, soap opera-like story line, RACING FEVER is a down and dirty exploitationer in the true Sixties tradition. #7710 \$15

### THE HOOKED GENERATION 1968 • color

Three drug-crazed criminals are tossed into the swamp, resulting in a gritty late-Sixties time capsule of homicide, hypodermics, and hippies gone bad.

Daisy, Acid, and Dum-Dum want to be big-time drug dealers but, unfortunately, have the collective I.Q. of a pack of rolling papers. After slaughtering a bunch of Cubans and stealing their drugs, they're confronted by the Coast Guard who board their boat for inspection. Daisy drops the drugs overboard in a barrel, Acid goes nuts,



and Dum-Dum kills everyone. The three also make hostages out of do-gooders Mark and his girlfriend Kelly, who tumble onto the scene. But when the gang learns that the drugs are too hot to sell, they go scurrying further into the Everglades as the FBI closes in. A.k.a. Alligator Alley, it ain't pretty. #7709 \$15

### THE PSYCHEDELIC PRIEST 1971 • color

THE PSYCHEDELIC PRIEST is a real rarity from the tail end of the hippie movement, and emerges as a disturbing little exploitation film about a man-of-the-cloth-gone-way-off-the-deep-end.

John is a young priest with a Beatle haircut who tries to teach college students about the ways of the Lord. When he catches a group of kids smoking pot, they retaliate by offering him a Coke laced with acid. Within moments, Father John is off on a wild trip, abandoning the church and taking off on a journey to find himself.

But John's religious upbringing has made him ignorant to the real ways of the world and, after encountering racist cops and being left behind by a girl he picked up en route to L.A., his life soon spirals out of control in a foggy haze of alcoholism and drug abuse. Acid fueled nostalgia, Amen! #7707 \$15

## THE PSYCHEDELIC PRIEST

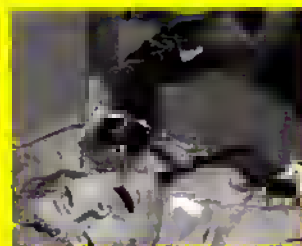


### THE NAKED ZOO

### THE NAKED ZOO • 1969 • color with Rita Hayworth, Stephen Oliver, Fay Spain, Fleurette Carter, Ford Rainey, Joe E. Ross

It's not often one gets to see a cinematic Sex Goddess of the Forties wallowing in Sixties drug culture, but that's exactly what happens when Miss Columbia Pictures, RITA HAYWORTH herself, enters THE NAKED ZOO. And, yup, it's quite a spectacle!

Against the backdrop of Miami's Coconut Grove, Hayworth plays Helen Golden, the bored, hot-to-trot wife of a wheelchair-bound millionaire. Taking advantage of her husband's infirmity and wealth, Helen pays ultra-hip, perpetually stoned writer Terry Shaw to be her lover. They also ingest lots of booze, pot, and pills. But when Mr. G catches Helen and Terry



kissing on a couch, he whips out a gun in a frenzy, and goes zipping around in his motorized wheelchair, trying to shoot them. It's a particularly wild scene that ends only when the old coot is accidentally killed.

The plot then takes a psychedelic detour as Terry keeps his distance from Helen and takes up with both a lovely black lady and a strange ditzy blonde until Helen beckons him back with a vague threat of blackmail.

Groovy man! #7708 \$15

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